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Anatoly Karpov

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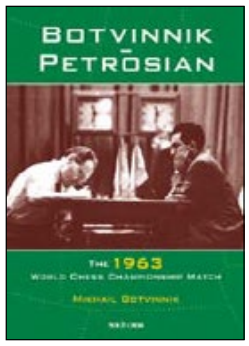

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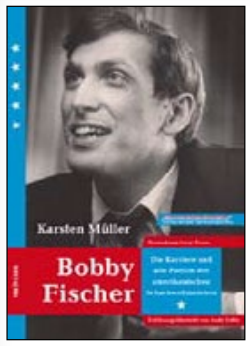

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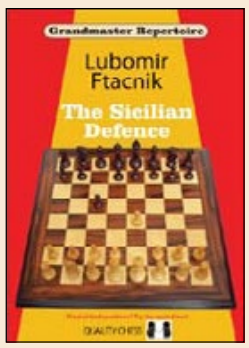

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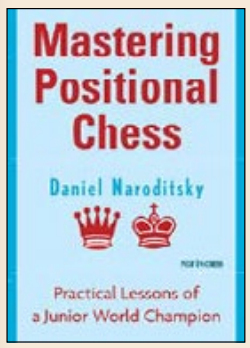

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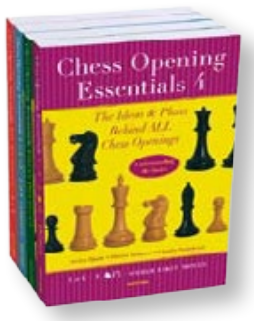

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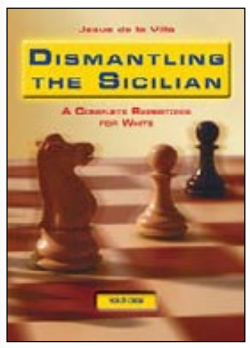

Dismantling the Sicilian
A Complete Repertoire for White
by Jesus de la Villa

"A total knockout" – Arne Moll, Chess Vibes

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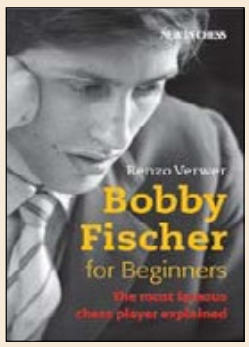

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by Renzo Verwer

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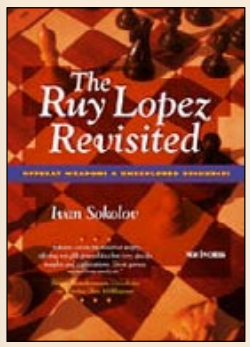

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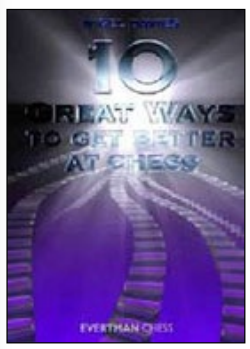

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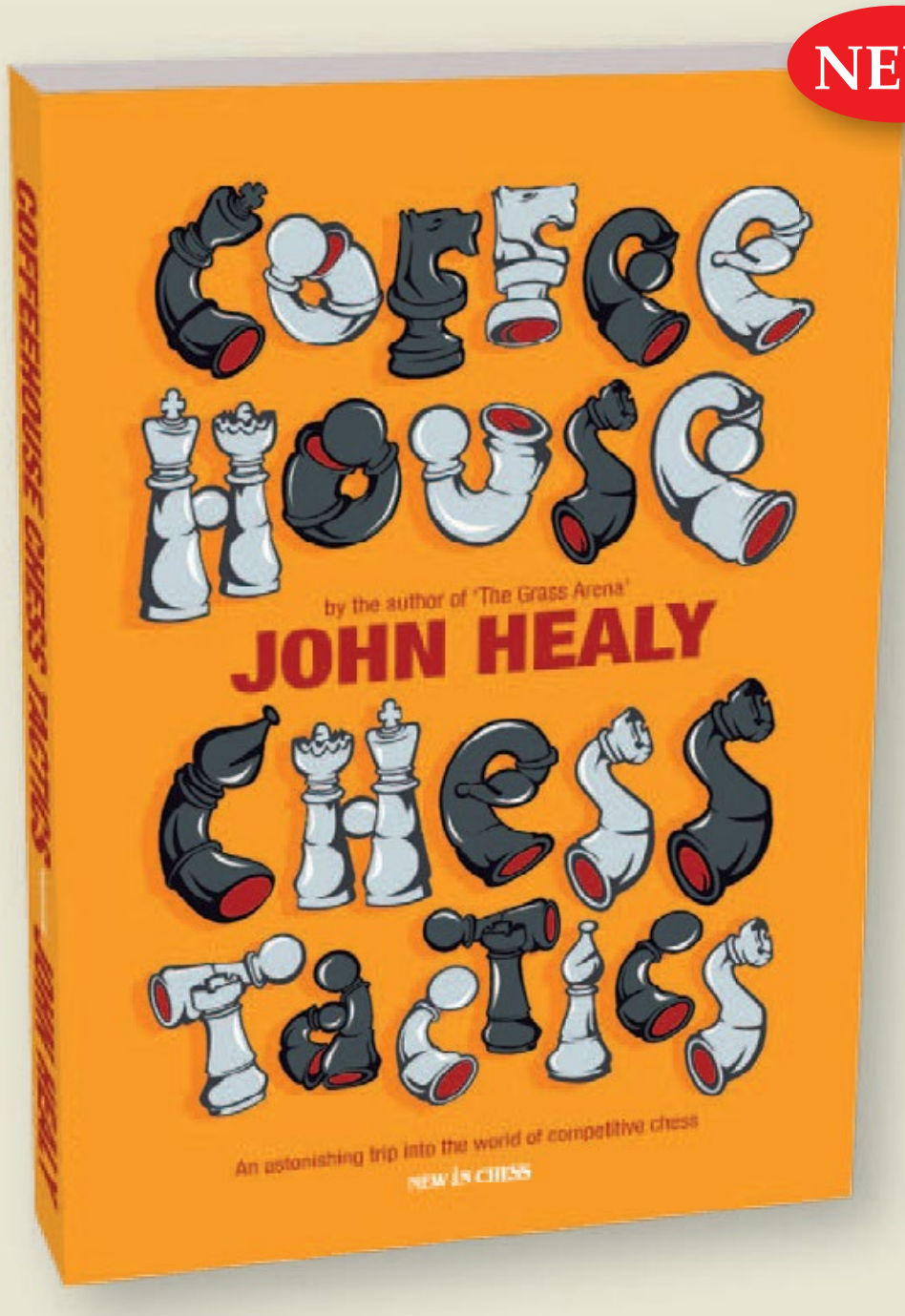

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2010 Issue 6

NEW IN CHESS

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6 NIC'S Café

8 Your Move

10 Interview: Anatoly Karpov
The 12th World Champion hopes to be the next President of FIDE. Karpov and his team want to restore the integrity of the game and put an end to the 'financial slavery' of many FIDE member-countries and the 'cannibalism' that the present leadership relies on as a business model. FIDE should become a healthy organization with offices in Moscow, Paris and New York and a board that brings real sponsorship to the game.

18 Pono Promo in Dortmund
Making his debut at the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting, Ruslan Ponomariov raced to victory, a full point ahead of Vietnamese sensation Le Quang Liem, and one and a half points ahead of favourite Vladimir Kramnik, who failed to win his 10th Dortmund trophy

38 Café Central
Genna Sosonko brings back to life the days when the Café Central in Vienna was a chess centre of international renown. It was here that Savielly Tartakower dreamt of a life as a chess professional.

46 Cool Hand Luke
If there's such a thing as a North American Open Tournament with ideal conditions, then Alex Shabalov believes that the 47th edition of the Canadian Open in Toronto came pretty close.

54 L'Italia Scacchistica
This year the venerable *l'Italia Scacchistica* celebrates its centenary. Adolivio Capece, the current editor, swiftly guides you through one hundred years of chess.

60 Caruana Clinches Biel in Tie-break
The 43rd Biel Chess Festival rolled out the red carpet for youth. The entire top group was composed of junior grandmasters ranging in age from 16 to 23. After a tense and close race, top-seed Maxime Vachier-Lagrave finished shared first with Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son and Fabiano Caruana. In the blitz tiebreak the Italian grandmaster prevailed to claim one of his finest victories to date.

COLOPHON p.9
SUBSCRIPTIONS p.105

B-Tournaments and Bermuda Parties 76
Jonathan Rowson loves Olympiads. A beautifully produced book on the Dresden Olympiad brought back many a sweet and bitter-sweet memory.

Hallucinating in Philly 80
Loek van Wely continues his American tour. Our roving reporter had a hard time believing his eyes at the World Open.

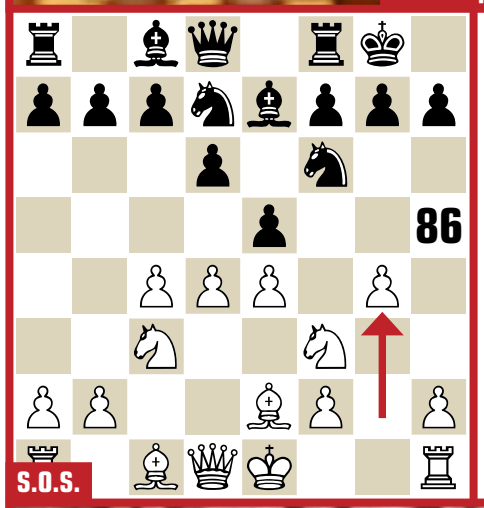
S.O.S.: New Recipe in the Old Indian 86
Jeroen Bosch shows a spicy way to rock the solid Old Indian Defence.

Modest Petrosian 90
Petrosian fan Hans Ree read the new book on the Petrosian-Botvinnik World Championship match in 1963.

Of Nopenings and Nendings 94
An unexpected day off from work gave Matthew Sadler the idea to try his hand at a chess tournament again. An excellent occasion to wheel out the Creepy Crawly!

♖ and ♙ vs. ♗ and ♙ Revisited 101
Jan Timman loves endgames and the secrets they hold. Any reader who follows him on this journey amongst the beauty of endings will understand his passion.

Just Checking 106
Any idea what Klaus Bischoff would save from his house if it went on fire?



CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE
Klaus Bischoff, Jeroen Bosch, Adolivio Capece, Fabiano Caruana, Le Quang Liem, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Luke McShane, Ruslan Ponomariov, Hans Ree, Jonathan Rowson, Matthew Sadler, Alex Shabalov, Wesley So, Genna Sosonko, Jan Timman, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Loek van Wely

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
Torsten Behl, Peter Binkhorst, Dagobert Kohlmeyer, www.monroi.com, Jan Rasch

COVER PHOTO
Anatoly Karpov: New In Chess

NIC'S CAFÉ

Capa's Favourite Portrait

The interview in our previous issue with 2800+ collector David DeLucia was illustrated with various gems from his collection. One of them was a painting of Capablanca which we claimed to be the 'original oil painting by Cuban artist Esteban Valderrama'. This was not so. The painting we showed was the one that used to hang in the Manhattan Chess Club in New York, which is also in Mr. DeLucia's possession. This was sloppy, but on the other hand it gives us the opportunity to show the Valderrama as well, which is not done in oil but in pastel. As Olga Capablanca related, 'Capa' hated the

Valderrama's portrait of Capablanca.

lengthy sessions when he had to sit for Valderrama, but once the portrait was finished he was firmly attached to it for the rest of his life.

A Rough Guide to Campaigning

The campaigns for the FIDE presidential elections have considerably heated up in the past weeks and we could easily fill this entire issue reporting on the latest developments – which we will not. But we do emphatically advise anyone who is impressed by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's claims on his website www.onefide.com to also have a look at his opponent Anatoly Karpov's site, www.karpov2010.org. The travel reports on the two candidates' sites are also recommended reading. What struck us, and we have no idea what to deduce from it, is that Karpov is wearing his own clothes wherever he goes, whereas Ilyumzhinov happily dons some local robe, garment or hat the moment he arrives. At first we thought the current FIDE President was doing so voluntarily and out of friendliness, but we began to doubt when we saw a photo from a visit to Afghanistan in which it seems he is being force-fed by a local chess official.

An attempt by Ilyumzhinov to make a phone call in Kabul is thwarted.

Afghanistan has long been on top of the list of countries that Ilyumzhinov claims will vote for him. Having seen the smile on the face of this official we are not so sure.

Grandmasters in Action

Absorbed as we are by the FIDE elections, we had almost forgotten that in Khanty-Mansiysk we'll also see continental presidential elections (if there are enough hotel rooms to accommodate the candidates and their teams by that time, that is). There are three prominent candidates for the presidency of the European Chess Union: Silvio Danailov, manager of Veselin Topalov, Robert von Weizsäcker, son of former German president Richard von Weizsäcker, and Ali Nihat Yazici, the ever active president of the Turkish Chess Federation. Interestingly, both Von Weizsäcker and Nihat Yazici have strong international grandmasters on their tickets. The German candidate even has three: Johan Hjartarson, Nigel Short and Ivan Sokolov. The candidate for vice-president on Nihat Yazici's team is no less remarkable: Evgeny Bareev. The Russian grandmaster is a busy man these days, as he explained to us when he dropped by NIC's Café during a brief visit to Amsterdam. For the past five years he has been working for the Russian Chess Federation, which hasn't left him with a lot of time to play chess himself. The recent developments in the federation have considerably increased his workload. Following the ousting of Alexander Bakh, who took 12 people with him and will continue to do his good work for Russian chess, such as organizing the Tal Memorial and the Aeroflot Open, in his capacity as head of the Association of Russian Chess Federations, Bareev is now the head of the Russian national teams and is in charge of scholastic chess. He is also a key advisor to the newly appointed acting manager Ilya Levitov, who has been asked to restructure the Russian Chess Federation (as you may remember, Bareev and Levitov co-authored the acclaimed *From London to Elista*, a masterful account of the world championship matches that Vladimir Kramnik played). Needless to say, Bareev has more than enough work on his hands in his office on Gogolevsky Boulevard. Yet, having heard Nihat Yazici's

accounts of his accomplishments in Turkey in the past eight years, he couldn't resist the temptation when the President of the Turkish federation came to Moscow and invited him to join his team. If they get elected, Bareev will be responsible for the further development of scholastic and professional chess in Europe. How he will find time for all this is any-

NEW IN CHESS

Evgeny Bareev: all set to restructure chess in Russia and Europe.

one's guess, but he's received his wife's blessing and has already enlisted the help of various friends. And, not unimportant these days, he got a letter of support from Arkady Dvorkovich, the head of the Advisory Council of the Russian Chess Federation.

Bareev believes that Von Weizsäcker is the clear favourite to win the election. To his mind, Ali Nihat Yazici will only have a chance if the delegates don't vote 'geographically' and take the trouble to see what he has achieved in Turkey.

As Nihat Yazici is a fervent follower of Ilyumzhinov, the suggestion that Bareev also supports the Kalmykian businessman doesn't seem far-fetched. He agrees that he has nothing against Ilyumzhinov, but stresses that in his case it's much more a matter of being opposed to Karpov and Kasparov. He thoroughly dislikes both – so much so that saying he hates them seems closer to the truth. To stress this point he told us about a visit years ago to Karpov's house. Although he was there for about two hours, he was not even offered a glass of tea. 'This man has never done anything for anybody in his life. And he will not do so in the future.'

Alekhine's Gun

The musical tastes of chess players are probably as varied as those of other human beings, even though it cannot be denied that there is a peculiar focus on Rammstein in grandmasterly circles of late. Whether the affection is mutual and whether the leading exporters of German 'Tanz-Metal' play chess we don't know, but we have good grounds to assume that at least one member of the New York Death/Thrash Metal outfit Alekhine's Gun knows how to move the pieces. In case you are wondering, the sounds of Alekhine's Gun are an even farther cry from Schubert, as witness a testimony of a listener: 'My face is melted off!'

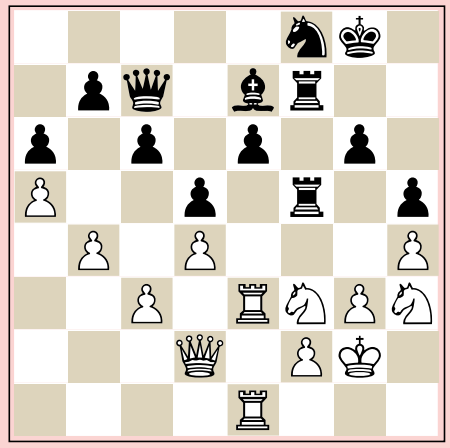
Alekhine's Gun

Readers with a penchant for chess history may know that Alekhine's Gun is a manoeuvre that made its way into the books after Alexander Alekhine used it to defeat Aaron Nimzowitsch at the tournament of San Remo in 1930. The manoeuvre consists of doubling the rooks with the queen supporting them from the rear, which leads to overpowering pressure on the enemy position.

A perfect example of Alekhine's Gun was seen at the recent British Championship in Canterbury, which ended in a runaway victory

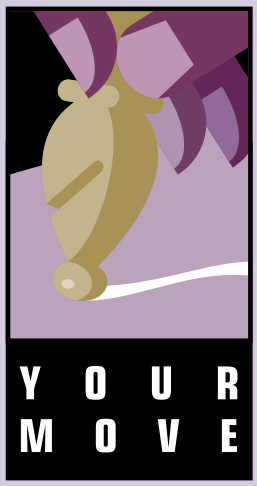
Michael Adams: 9½ out of 11.

for Michael Adams. Seeded first, Adams was the obvious favourite in a championship in which his main rivals were absent. Still, he must have been most pleased by his 9½/11 explosion, which netted him nine rating points in the process. Adams pulled Alekhine's Gun in Round 8 to beat Stuart Conquest.



Adams-Conquest
position after 35...♖gf7

36.♖1e2 The rook moves up one square to vacate e1 for the queen. **36...♖7f6 37.♘fg5 ♕d7 38.♕e1** The gun has been loaded, White is ready to shoot. **38...♗d6 39.♘xe6 ♘xe6 40.♖xe6 ♖xe6 41.♖xe6 ♔f7 42.♖e3** Black is a pawn down and the rest proved to be a 'matter of technique'.



Snuff boxes or Porsches

The fawning portrait of the collector Mr. DeLucia in New In Chess 2010/5 is not up to the critical standard I have come to expect from your magazine and particularly from the probing interviews by Mr. ten Geuzendam. Pray tell: in what way does someone like Mr. DeLucia benefit the chess world? By buying books and restricting access to them? By intending to leave them to another collector who will continue to keep them away from scrutiny? I wouldn't mind if he confined himself to collecting stuff like Capablanca's watch or score sheets or even fine books. Those are nice artifacts, but they are historically mostly irrelevant. And books are available to the serious chess researcher in Cleveland and in The Hague. But hording autographs, indeed hundreds of letters and keeping them away from research? This is not to be applauded; it is instead disgusting and egotistical. I've never met Mr. DeLucia, and I assume that he is a perfectly nice gentleman. But I have met people like him who proudly trumpet their ownership of, say, letters by Lasker as a trophy without any idea about their historical significance or insignificance, as the case might be. But many of them (not all, to be sure) are determined to keep historians away, like Fafnir guarding his gold. And, of course, they cannot edit or academically use those letters and other autographs themselves, since they lack both the technical training and the knowledge and understanding of the context. Only a trained historian who knows his sources could do this. I wonder whether Mr. DeLucia even reads and understands German, assuming that Lasker might have written some letters in his native language. Or is he content with just staring at the piece of paper? The only thing these collectors have is money, and nothing else. If only Mr. DeLucia (and his ilk) would collect snuff boxes or Porsches and leave the important stuff to libraries like Cleveland and The Hague. But no, it has to be chess autographs. Thanks for nothing.

Michael Dreyer
Jena, Germany

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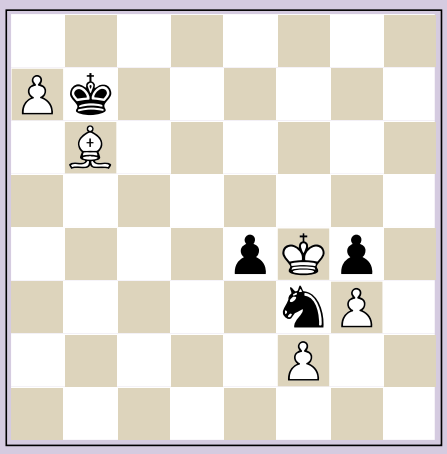
Postscript DJtG:

Your main gripe concerning Mr. DeLucia's collection seems to be that he has over a hundred Lasker manuscripts that are not freely accessible to chess historians or others interested in the life and person of the second World Champion. I think that in your anger you are highly unfair to Mr. DeLucia. To begin with, you could have read in the interview that most of the Lasker documents were originally collected by Jeff Kramer, who spent a lot of time and money tracing Lasker's relatives and acquiring these manuscripts. What do you think would have happened to these manuscripts if Mr. Kramer had not collected them? And do you think it is reasonable to expect him to donate his collection to a public institution after all the trouble he had gone to instead of trying to retrieve his investment? I think that without collectors such as Mr. Kramer and Mr. DeLucia a lot of valuable manuscripts would be lost. You suggest that Mr. DeLucia only wants to have these manuscripts for the sake of having them, and that essentially he is not interested in their content and doesn't want to share them with others. If you had seen and read his books, which are described in the article, you would know that he takes a great interest in chess history and bibliography and that he believes it the most natural thing for a collector to share his knowledge with others. There is only one restriction: he doesn't want to receive people he doesn't know in his library. Which doesn't mean that he has not been thinking about how he can make these Lasker manuscripts available to Lasker scholars. As he told me during our talks, he is looking for ways to disclose the contents of these manuscripts that will not affect his privacy. How he will do this, the future will tell, but it is an aspect of his collecting that he gives serious attention to. On a final note, in the article Mr. DeLucia expresses his reservations about selling or donating collections to public institutions and gives a telling example to explain why he'd prefer to see his collection go to another collector. You mention the libraries of Cleveland and The Hague. Certainly, wonderful libraries, but you may remember that when Dr. Niemeijer donated his collection to the Royal Library in The Hague, and kept donating books in the years that followed, he did so on two conditions: that it be merged with the collection of Antonius van der

Linde and that a systematic catalogue would be made to replace the catalogue that was published in 1955. The first and only part of the new catalogue of the Van der Linde-Niemeijeriana collection (describing a couple of hundred books) appeared in 1974(!). There is no reason to expect that any further parts will ever be published.

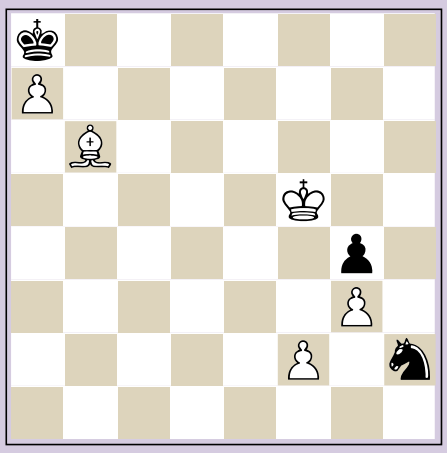
Kramnik-Grischuk

My friend Valter Pregarac pointed out an error in the analysis of the Kramnik-Grischuk game played at the Amber tournament in Nice and published in New In Chess 2010/3.



Kramnik-Grischuk
Nice rapid 2010
position after 55...♘f3

Kramnik says that in the diagrammed position White can only win with 56.♔xg4, since 56.♔xe4 leads to a positional draw after 56...♔a8 57.♔f5 ♘h2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

58.f4 gxf3 59.♗g1 ♔b7 60.♔f4 ♔a8 61.♔g5 ♘f1 62.g4 f2 63.♗xf2 ♘h2 64.♔f4 ♘xg4 65.♔xg4 ♔b7.

However, White has a much more effective plan at his disposal: bringing the king to h4 before playing f4. So instead of 58.f4 White must play 58.♔g5 ♔b7 59.♔h4 ♔a8, and only now 60.f4 gxf3 61.♔h3 ♘f1 62.g4, winning easily.

Timothy Šuc
Ankaran, Slovenia

Postscript Vladimir Kramnik:
Yes, the reader is right. I am ashamed.

Take it easy...

I'm absolutely in love with your magazine, a real number one in chess publishing. I would like to remark that in New In Chess 2010/5 I found a mistake. Accompanying Nigel Short's report from Cuba was a picture of stamps dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Capablanca's win against Lasker. This means they cannot have been issued in 1957! But I'm sure you already know... Take it easy and keep on with your brilliant work. I'm waiting for the next issue. Ciao.

Fabio Acciaioli
Pesaro, Italia

Editorial postscript:
Of course, you're right. They were issued in 1951!

Grivas instead of Shipov

In NIC's Café of New In Chess 2010/4, you mentioned CNC (Chess Network Company) and the daily analysis of the Anand-Topalov World Championship games in Sofia. Contrary to what you write, there were no comments by GM Sergey Shipov's on the CNC website. These game notes were actually done by the undersigned and were quite extensive, as you still can see in the archives pages of the site.

Efstratios Grivas
Athens, Greece

Unidentified? Identified!

In the Bent Larsen tribute in New In Chess 2010/4 there is a photo of the Danish grandmaster giving a simul in the United States.

The photo caption says that the smiling lady he is playing against is 'unidentified'. The lady in the photo is the actress Mitzi Mayfair, the wife of Charles Henderson, who is sitting on her left.

Erik Osbun
El Centro, CA, USA

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VERTRIEB: asv vertriebs gmbh
Süderstraße 77
20097 Hamburg
PHONE: 00-31-(0)72-51 27 137
FAX: 00-31-(0)72-51 58 234
E-MAIL:
SUBSCRIPTIONS: nic@newinchess.com
EDITORS: editors@newinchess.com
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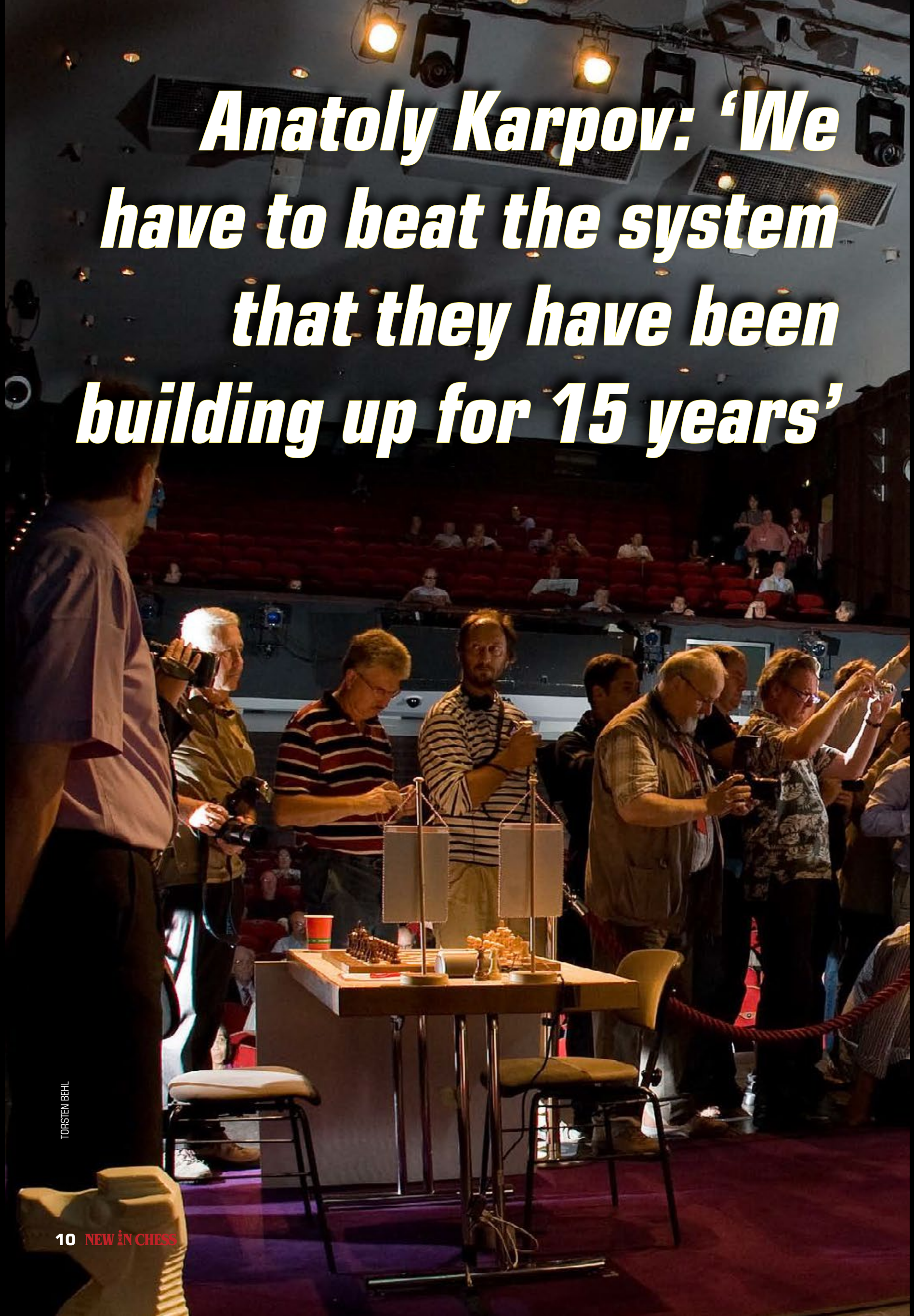
Anatoly Karpov: ‘We have to beat the system that they have been building up for 15 years’



TORSTEN BEHL

Anatoly Karpov hopes to be the next President of FIDE. The 12th World Champion and his team want to restore the integrity of the game and put an end to the 'financial slavery' of many FIDE member-countries and the 'cannibalism' that the present leadership relies on as a business model. FIDE should become a healthy organization with offices in Moscow, Paris and New York and a board that brings real sponsorship to the game. **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** spoke to the presidential candidate in Dortmund, where he arrived fresh from a tour of seven Asian countries.

Used to the spotlights. Anatoly Karpov has arrived to make the first move of the seventh round of the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting and the press has not failed to notice.

He knew in advance that being on the campaign trail would be tough and energy-draining, but even seasoned globetrotter Anatoly Karpov must sometimes frown at his schedule these days, although he won't admit it. The world chess federation FIDE has close to 170 member-countries, second only to soccer federation FIFA, which has 202 members. In the months leading up to the FIDE presidential elections in Khanty-Mansiysk, Karpov intends to visit between 40 and 50 countries. Some of these countries he intends to visit more than once, while dozens of other countries are visited by other members of his team, which includes Garry Kasparov.

The 12th World Champion arrives in Dortmund in the company of Richard Conn, candidate for Deputy President. In nine days they have been to seven Asian countries: Japan, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand. Karpov looks remarkably fresh and fit and explains that he thinks this is because his biological clock is more or less in sync with the time in Germany. Still, he confesses that when he woke up early in the morning in his hotel room before flying to Europe, it took him some time to realize which country he was in, something that in all those years of travelling had never happened to him before.

But it's worth it, as he and Richard Conn have left all meetings with members of federations and politicians with the encouraging feeling that they managed to bring across their vision and found supporters for their cause. The trips around the globe have also taught him that the abuse of power, the buying of votes and the intimidation practices of the current FIDE administration are even more wide-spread, deep-rooted and worrying than he already knew. In Bolivia the president of the chess federation was so afraid after FIDE officials had forbidden him to meet the other candidate that he did not even dare to accept an invitation of the Bolivian president to come to his residence, where Karpov was giving a simul. In Singapore parents complained to him that their children were forced to attend chess trainings at the academy of Ignatius Leong, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's candidate for General Secretary, at 50 euro a session. If they trained anywhere else they would not get a chance to represent Singapore in official events.

Karpov and his team want to bring a new and healthy business model to FIDE based for a large part on corporate sponsorship, and replace the current 'business model' that Conn prefers to refer to as cannibalism: 'They basically take money from the chess federations and use that money for whatever their own uses are. And then they redistribute a small portion of it, a very low percentage to a few federations. Many federations receive nothing, most receive a fraction of what they are paying. Ilyumzhinov's business model is that he wants a situation in which he is the only resource they have. That gives him the power to distribute whatever money he wants during election periods.'

Karpov's visit to Germany is a brief one; in fact he's only in transit, on his way to the Middle East, a destination that is not revealed publicly, as they want to keep their opponents guessing. At the Schauspielhaus he will make the first move of the seventh round of the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting at the board of Kramnik and Ponomariov. Later in the afternoon he will give a press conference. In the hour between these commitments he has agreed to sit down for a talk. The only problem we have is how to leave the theatre quietly and undisturbed, with journalists and photographers, and no doubt hordes of autograph hunters, waiting in front of the stage. The plan is simple: after he has made the first move Karpov will go backstage, where I will join him. From there, Carsten Hensel, who manages his visit to Dortmund, will whisk us out of the building. The plan works, although Karpov obviously cannot withstand the temptation when backstage commentator Klaus Bischoff invites him to say a few words about the various openings that have appeared on the boards, particularly a Caro-Kann. Karpov shares his first impressions of the games with the spectators that are following the audio commentary, answers some questions about his campaign and then we sneak out an emergency exit and walk to the Dortmund City Hall, where there is a quiet café to talk.

'If we cannot beat this team now, the chess world will suffer for another 10, 20 or maybe even 30 years.'

– Do you recall when you first had the idea that one day you'd want to be FIDE President?

'I'd already had this idea for a long time, because I saw a process that I didn't like and I saw how the current FIDE team is acting. I had my personal court case against FIDE in 2000, when they violated my rights and broke an agreement that we had signed in Elista in 1998. As a result of this I couldn't participate in the world championship. In principle I don't like their reforms and experiments, which are not very well thought out. I have a very bad feeling about the

NEW IN CHESS

Anatoly Karpov came to Dortmund in the company of Richard Conn, his ticket's candidate for Deputy President.

knock-out system. I am almost sure that we lost the Tilburg tournament because of the knock-out system (which the legendary Interpolis tournament introduced in 1992 and maintained till 1994, when they decided to quit chess – DJtG). The organizers were very unhappy with the press coverage and the whole formula and they held their last tournament two years later. And then, only a few years later, in 1997, FIDE held the world championship with the same system. Which proved that these people had no idea what they were doing. Then they could not accept psychologically that they made a mistake and were stubborn for so many years. They make one change after the other, but you should think these things over well. What I have in mind is that we should have a meeting with the leading grandmasters. We need to decide how we proceed with the world championship, how many games there should be in the Candidates' matches. I prefer matches over a tournament. Of course, the World Championship match should have more games than we have now. Not such long matches as we had before, 24 games or even 32 or 48 as against Kasparov, I believe the number should be 14 or 16 games. Which still would be easier, because in former times we had adjournments. Now these matches can be shorter because the games are played till they're decided.'

– *You say you saw things go wrong and that this gave you the idea. At the same time this running for FIDE President seems to fit into a career plan...*

'Absolutely not...'

– *I mean if you look at your work for the Peace Foundation, your work for UNICEF...*

'I am already active internationally, so I don't need this. I don't consider this as a part of my career. Not at all. But I am sure that I can do a lot of good things for chess. This is a good cause to dedicate the last active part of my life to. But I don't see this as a professional necessity or as part of a career plan.'

– *You never thought during your active career, well, after I quit playing I would like to do this or that?*

'Basically, I am a very concrete person. Chess politics is not part of my dream, but I will be happy when we start to change things, when we can bring sponsors and organize a better chess life in the world. This is what I am looking for, but just travelling and just repeating parts of our program and explaining time and again what we are going to do, is not a very productive part of life (laughs). But you have to do this, because you have to explain to people what the difference will be, what will change. How we want to reorganize the chess world.'

– *At the moment you are overdoing it a bit, but in general I think you like travelling. Does this stem from your early youth, when you were a boy in Zlatoust and you were collecting stamps and dreaming about the world and maybe thinking, one day I want to go to all these places?*

'Yes, as I've said before, I had a dream to be a pilot. So somehow I am this pilot now, flying everywhere. But you see, I've travelled so much and I've seen everything that a normal person, and also a not so nor-

mal person, would like to see in the world. It's difficult to find a place that would amaze me as a traveller. But I have many friends all over the world and there are many people I would like to see again, and that's a nice part of my life.'

– *That's an attractive aspect of what you are doing now?*

'Yes, it is. And of course we will develop chess. From all the trips I have made I realize that there is a big demand, for instance, for chess for children. Leaders of countries, presidents, governments, they are all looking for something they can present to their youngsters. Chess can become a part of social programs. We are not presenting chess in schools because we want thousands of grandmasters. The world doesn't need them. But we want to teach children how to think, how to understand strategies, how to make plans.'

– *You believe in chess as an educational tool.*

'Yes. Also when children are coming together with adults, which we have everywhere in chess clubs, they are somehow under control. The adults can always see when a boy has changed his behaviour and they can ask what has happened. When children are in the streets and the parents are at work, they have no control.'

– *It is no secret that you are a collector. You collect stamps, you collect chess books, you collected tournament victories. How many countries have you collected so far as a traveller?*

'More than one hundred countries for sure now (laughs). One hundred and four or five. And when I become president I will have to visit more. Of course, I have a big knowledge of the world and the chess situation in all countries. Nowadays I don't even have to travel, I know things from previous trips. I know many people, I've been travelling to the farthest corners of the world. The only place I haven't been to is Alaska...'

– *High time you went there, then...*

'(Laughs)'

– *When you travelled to these countries, what were the most encouraging things that people said to you?*

'What I already said, there is demand in the world for chess education. Chess education and chess for children will be one of the main points of our program that we will realize. As the founder of the Children's Olympiad and the president of many junior competitions in Russia and outside Russia, I believe that even without the federation I would be able to find money. I never had a big staff for the Children's Olympiads, but I organized eight of them. Without big help, without FIDE's cooperation. I spoke to Campomanes at the time, but then he asked money to be the patron, so I said, I think it was enough that I paid you cuts of the prize-money as World Champion. I will never pay you from my children's competitions, because this is my charity work. Actually, what I did, we organized all these tournaments like grandmaster tournaments. We covered all expenses, in the country. The teams had to pay their travel expenses but the rest was covered. Then, when FIDE took this competition away from me, they changed it again, and now the teams must pay all their expenses and not only their travel expenses.'

– *And this is something you want to change back?*

'Maybe not for all (hesitates), well, maybe for all... I think that with corporate sponsorship we can organize children's tournaments like this, even on a large scale. Not 10 or 20, but 100 or 200 participants. Companies are not closed for children. Maybe they are not too forthcoming for professional sports right now, but for children they are open.'

– *This is the experience you gained from your work for UNICEF...*

'Yes, for UNICEF, for the Peace Foundation. Another part of my program that we will work out quickly when I become president are agreements with UNESCO and UNICEF. UNESCO is very important, because it's a United Nations body, and they are responsible for cultural heritage and for education in the world. If you want to develop chess education in schools in various countries, the involvement of UNESCO is crucial. And now it's a good moment for UNICEF, even though we have already missed a couple of years. I proposed this a long time ago, and the international chess federation could have been the first federation to sign an agreement with UNICEF. As an ambassador, I spoke with Carol Bellamy (the fourth Executive Director of UNICEF from 1995 to 2005 – DJtG), and she was ready to sign an agreement. Chess could have been the first federation, but the first one was FIFA five years ago. You could see it at the World Cup when the children were coming onto the pitch with flags and logos. And we're not even the second federation, because UNICEF has already made an agreement with the tennis federation. But we still have a chance to be third.'

– *Your opponent is Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. Would it be a disaster if he got re-elected?*

'Not for me, for the chess world, yes. Why? As I said, I don't see this as the dream of my life, but I believe that changes are needed. If we cannot beat this team now, the chess world will suffer for another 10, 20 or maybe even 30 years. As long as they want to stay (laughs).'

– *On the websites of the candidates the countries are indicated that are supposed to support them. According to Ilyumzhinov's website, they have a big lead. How can this be?*

'First of all, they collected opinions, not documents. They refused to produce documents even to

the court in Lausanne now (the lawsuit that Karpov's team and several federations filed against FIDE at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, seeking to have Ilyumzhinov's ticket disqualified – DJtG). They refuse to open their documents for registration, so if they say that the Solomon Islands federation supports them, who can check this? First they were spreading rumours that I might get 20 countries. Now they give me better chances and say 40 or 50 countries. But it will become clear that... But it's a very difficult fight, because the members of our team aren't facing individuals or even a team of opponents. We have to beat the system that they have been building up for 15 years. Travelling around I have discovered how much influence they have and how many threats they present. This is a big problem. For us and for the chess world. In Europe we cannot even imagine what is going on in Asia, in America, in the Caribbean area, in South America. I can describe what we have in those continents in a few words: this is like financial slavery. Because the federations are in permanent debt to FIDE, FIDE can control them. They can close their eyes and let them participate in competitions or they can say, no, you are in debt, you are not allowed. With all the fairytales that they spread about millions and millions of dollars that are in chess. But if you have millions of dollars you don't need to get a couple of thousand from each federation (laughs). We have about 170 member countries now, the number is always fluctuating, and of these 170 federations maybe 65 or 70 are healthy.'

– *And the unhealthy ones are the ones living in financial slavery to FIDE?*

'Yes. And this is a problem. So one important thing I am going to do, and my team members agreed to this, is that we will abolish the payment for international titles. I became international master, international grandmaster and World Champion and I never paid for my titles. They created this system, and not such a long time ago either. For most of our team this is charity work. The people in this team are successful professionals, they have contacts, but they are not looking for an income from this. We just come here to offer our possibilities, our contacts, our time. Another source of income for FIDE these days that I discovered is the special title of FIDE-trainer. I had heard about it, but I didn't know that this is some kind of short-term licence they have produced. You have to pay for the first time and then you have to renew it every two or three years. Which is unbelievable (laughs). I don't know what the regulations are to get this title, but of course once you get it you don't lose your professionalism. But each time they have to pay again. All these improper goings-on should be stopped, of course.'

– *You are a sportsman with a fantastic record. Do you see this fight also as a sports challenge? Does it trigger you as a sportsman to fight for these countries?*

'You know, if I do something, I tend to do it seriously. All the projects I have been involved in in my life I took seriously. At the beginning of this campaign I didn't know whether I would have to travel a lot, but now I believe I have to do it. And chess taught me to work as much as is needed.'

NEW IN CHESS

Anatoly Karpov could not withstand the temptation to join commentators Klaus Bischoff and Sebastian Siebrecht to talk about the games that had just started.

– *I was wondering about the logistics. You have been living out of a suitcase for I don't know how many months. Do you have an assistant who takes care of your laundry, who packs your suitcase?*

Of course I have people that organize concrete things like tickets or the coordination of flights.

– *When you go to all these countries, there's a fair chance they will give you souvenirs, and you cannot carry all of them. Is somebody sending them home for you?*

'(Laughs) This is a problem I have not yet thought of. I realized very early in my life, I think in 1970, that I shouldn't buy souvenirs myself. Yet I could organize my personal museum with all the cups and special trophies I have in different apartments in Moscow. My mother, who is fortunately still alive, keeps part of the trophies, then I have two apartments, I have a country house, everything is there.'

– *You have been travelling so much. I remember somebody once saying, it's almost as if he is afraid to be at home. How much time do you spend in Moscow every year?*

'You know, I don't take long vacations. And so when I am not on trips inside Russia or outside, I stay at home. My daughter (starts laughing), she will be eleven years old in a couple of days, and she asked me, so tell me, how many nights have you slept in our country house? I said, Sasha, you know I have many things to do in Moscow, so I don't stay there very often. I stay in our Moscow apartment. But in summer she likes to be in our country house on the Moscow river and she says, yes, but still, how many days? So I say, we've had this country house for 21 years. Maybe I spent 6 or 7 nights there.'

– *What did she say? Come on daddy this should be more?*

'No, no, no. Because she understands. The first seven years, before she started going to school, she was living outside of Moscow. And mostly I came there for only one day, Sunday or Saturday, and then I had to go back, because I am still leading a couple of organizations. When I am in Moscow I work day and night, without Saturdays and Sundays. But on average I stay in Moscow between four and five months a year.'

– *You have teamed up with Garry Kasparov, which for some people came as a surprise, even though you've been on good terms for quite some years now. For some countries he will be an asset, but for others he will be a liability, because he is not liked everywhere. Have you considered these pros and cons?*

'We have some problems in Russia because of this. But I believe that for chess it is very important. This is an absolutely unique situation when the most famous chess players have a mutual understanding that changes are needed. That chess is going down and down. We need to present changes. We are working very hard now, according to our chess habit as top professionals. We understand that when necessary you have to work. There are no limits, not even at night. And what is very important is that we have this business trust. If he says something I know that it will be done. If I say something he knows that it will be done. It's very important that we have this understanding and this mutual trust.'

– *So in general you thought, it's more of an advantage to work with him than a disadvantage?*

'You know, I didn't count advantages and disadvantages, but I believe that this is very important. Even if he is not so well accepted in some parts of the world, still for chess players around the world it's extremely important. If the elections were not decided by the votes of delegates but by the world's chess society as a whole, there would not even be a competition. Like in Russia, I would minimize my chances if I'd say 95 per cent of the Russian chess players are on my side (laughs).'

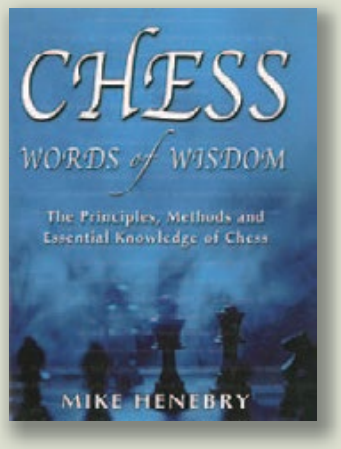
– *So you must also have been pleased by the support of Magnus Carlsen?*

'Of course. Actually the problem is that chess players, even if they feel changes are necessary, even if they suffer, are not ready to do anything. They stay on the sidelines waiting to see if there will be changes and whether they will get more money, which would be fantastic. But if it is in your interest you should do something.'

– *If you get elected you'd be the second World Champion to be president of FIDE after Euwe, who crowned you as World Champion. In whose footsteps would you like to step? Do you have any examples?*

'Of course I have my own ideas, but I believe that Euwe was a successful president. But Folke Rogard was also very good. He was a lawyer and he respected the regulations and the rules. He was very strict. Max (Euwe) was maybe too nice a person to be president. He was a good president, but he was not very strict. I met Folke Rogard only once in my life, but from Botvinnik I know that he was very strict. If these are the regulations, then please don't touch the regulations. I would try to follow his example. You couldn't imagine that the Interzonal is going on and then somebody adds some candidates. Or some extra seeds. What kind of organization is this? (laughs)'

– *The elections are supposed to be in Khanty-Mansiysk. Can you imagine that we will see fair elections?*



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'Of course it's hard to imagine fair elections, but this means that we must work hard and get a large advantage. But talking about Khanty-Mansiysk, they have big problems, and this is FIDE's mistake, because they sent the wrong estimate of the number of participants. This will be a big problem, especially for journalists. The priority will be the participants in the Olympiad and the delegates. But even for them they don't have enough hotel rooms. And the nearest city is some 150 kilometres away. And another thing: FIDE present it as if they are organizing everything, like the charters. And I discovered that they put pressure on

'So I say, we've had this country house for 21 years. Maybe I spent 6 or 7 nights there.'

the federation presidents in that if they behave badly, they won't get seats in the charters. Or they make them pay the full rate. And if you behave well you get a discount. All this rubbish. I am almost sure that the organizing committee in Russia and the local authorities don't know that FIDE raised a lot in extra fees for single rooms. Which don't exist in that number. I know from Cyprus that they were offered two single rooms for additional payment. Single rooms that no one can guarantee them. I told these people that the charters are not organized by FIDE. They are collecting information, but they're not organizing them. If players or delegates have problems, they need not write to FIDE, they can write to the Russian government, to Vice-Prime Minister Zhukov, or to the governor of Khanty-Mansiysk, Natalia Komarova. They can write by email directly. The governor has no real interest in chess or the Olympiad, but it's been decided so she will fulfil all obligations. She wants to have it as perfectly organized as possible. Of course, I also asked for a guarantee of physical security for our people and she said, don't worry, nothing will happen, everything is under control. I also recommend that if presidents of federations or participants receive any threats, they should inform the organizers immediately, as the Russian government has given guarantees. They will not be able to cause any problems.

One more thing about the lack of accommodation. Have you heard what happened to the German delegation? The German Federation sent a request to FIDE that they needed such and such a number of rooms for their team for the ECU elections. And they received the answer: no rooms. From FIDE. And then I was in Russia and reported this to the government and asked how this was possible. And so Germany solved their problems and received the best accommodation they could have. But now we have a response from FIDE that for my team they don't have rooms (laughs).'

– *Both Ilyumzhinov and you are promising large sums that will be invested in chess if you get elected. What guarantee is there that any of this money will appear?*

'Of course it's difficult to present full guarantees when you're not yet in the position. But we have letters from companies saying that when I become president, when this team is leading the chess world, they are ready to support. In some letters we already have minimum figures, which is why we were able to announce these four million dollars.'

– *And you have your doubts about the promises of the other side?*

'(With a surprised look) There is an article on our website www.karpov2010.org on all the promises Kirsan has made in the past 15 years...'

– *You wrote somewhere that none of the money he says he's spent on chess can be found in FIDE's books...*

'I am not sure they published their last report on 2009, because they are afraid. But 2008 is on the FIDE site. At least it was. You only have to check, which is what people are normally too lazy to do. They believe in these tales of millions and millions, but the best budget was one and a half million. FIDE counts the World Championship in Bulgaria, but this was not their money. That was the Bulgarian government. In that way Campomanes maybe spent 150 million if you count all the Olympiads. Now they will count the 12 million euro that the Norwegian government is giving for the Olympiad if they get it (laughs). And then Kirsan is counting this chess village in Kalmykia, but is it the property of the international chess federation? I am sure it is not.'

– *Supposing you will win, what would be the ideal place for the FIDE headquarters as far as you are concerned?*

'I believe that we need Moscow. Then I would like to have an office in Paris, maybe Monte Carlo, but I prefer Paris for historical reasons. This was the city where our chess federation was founded. And we need an office in New York. Not for the United States, but for contacts there. We need seats in financial centres, because if you're looking for corporate sponsors you must have your offices there. If you ask Americans to make a donation and ask them to transfer it to Moscow, I don't think that would work (laughs). Or the other way around. If you ask Russians to transfer money to New York, no, no, this wouldn't work either (keeps laughing).'

PONO PROMO IN DORTMUND

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Eight years ago Ruslan Ponomariov won the FIDE knock-out World Championship in Moscow. Instead of ultimately playing the desired match against Garry Kasparov, this prodigious talent got entangled in political machinations that only frustrated his career. Now, at 26, Ponomariov has rejoined the very best. Making his debut at the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting, the Ukrainian grandmaster raced to victory, a full point ahead of Vietnamese sensation Le Quang Liem, and one and a half points ahead of favourite Vladimir Kramnik, who failed to win his 10th Dortmund trophy. With this fine result Ponomariov returns to the world's top 10. The winner believes he owes his success to the stability he has found in his personal life. And, of course, following the good example of World Champion Vishy Anand and his men, there is Rammstein, the choice of champions these days!

One of the interesting aspects of a tournament when evaluating the outcome is in which stage of the game the crucial encounters were decided. High on the list of probabilities are 1) in the heat of battle, 2) due to a blunder, and 3) at home, thanks to exquisite opening preparation. Needless to say, opening preparation is an essential part of any grandmaster's luggage these days, but one might expect it to play an even more prominent role in the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting. Dortmund is the only of the so-called 'super-tournaments' where the drawing of lots is done well in advance of the event. As a result, the players know exactly when they will play whom and with what colour. That knowledge should be beneficial to all participants, one would guess, but listening to the comments after the prizes had been divided, one had to conclude that it's only a real advantage for those players who guessed their opponents' choices right and prepared best. Le Quang Liem, who sensationally claimed second place with a stable and mature performance, confessed that for one month he had worked eight to 10 hours a day and on some days even more. As a reward, the Vietnamese grandmaster barely faced any opening problems. Ruslan Ponomariov, who finished a full point ahead of the 19-year-old debutant, was also happy with his preparation. Between the Kings' tournament in Romania and Dortmund, he and his second Zakhar Efimenko had only had two weeks to train, which they used optimally by drawing up plans based on the playing schedule.

Ruslan Ponomariov: ‘Life continues. After this tournament there will be new tournaments and this tournament will soon be forgotten. But it does give you positive emotions, however briefly.’

Announcing the pairings early is one of several Dortmund traditions. Others include the perennial opening bars of Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* at the start of the round and, of a more recent date, a 15-minute delay in the transmission of the moves to the tournament website (and any other site relaying the games). When the delay was introduced this decision was explained as an anti-cheating measure, but once it had been pointed out that this didn't make any sense if you didn't also frisk the players or ban their seconds from the playing hall, the delay was explained as a bonus for the spectators that take the trouble to come to the Schauspielhaus. Two (or was it three?) years ago I explained to the tournament director that I could hardly imagine anyone coming to the venue because they wanted to see the moves 15 minutes before the Internet audience. This year I really began to feel like Cato Maior when I explained to that same tournament director that the only real effect of this rule was that the journalists in the press room cannot follow the games live and have to guess the result when suddenly two players walk in. Just like two or three years ago he replied that for next year they might consider not having the delay in the press room.

Dortmund has also often been criticized for its conservative invitation policy. This year the format was again a six-player double round-robin, which made it hard for them to avoid several familiar faces. Last year's winner Vladimir Kramnik was obviously invited, if only to give him the chance to win his 10th Dortmund trophy. Arkady Naiditsch is Germany's highest-rated player and lives in Dortmund, while Peter Leko, who won in 1999, 2002 and 2008, has close ties with the city (according to the tournament brochure, it's his second home). Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, the current number six in the world rankings, was invited for the third time. The remaining two players made their debut and it was gratifying to see that they did so well. Ruslan Ponomariov, FIDE World Champion in 2002, is unambiguously on his way back to the top after failed attempts at a match against Kasparov in 2003 clearly frustrated his career. Le Quang Liem, perhaps Asia's greatest promise, earned his invitation earlier this year when he won the Aeroflot Open in Moscow.

Sometimes the Dortmund organizers do draw lessons from an earlier experience. Last year, on a Saturday, they had a full house (of paying visitors) when to their horror the stage suddenly emptied, because all three games had ended in quick draws. The antidote was simple: this time draw offers were forbidden. The effect was most refreshing, and at the end of 10 hard-fought rounds the organizers could look back on one of the liveliest editions ever.

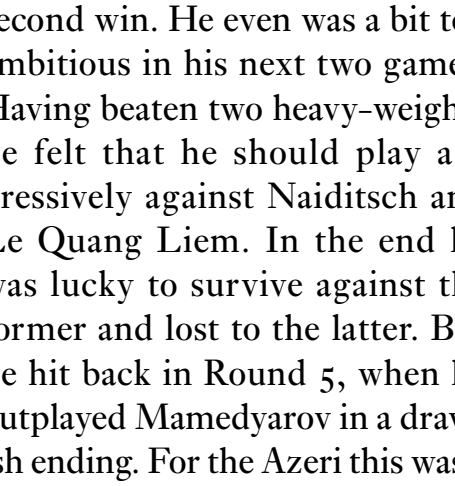
The man of the early rounds was Ponomariov, who in his first two games defeated Dortmund stalwarts Leko and Kramnik. That second game was a remarkable tale of opening preparation from both sides. In a Catalan, Ponomariov confidently chose a continuation that he and Efimenko had looked at when training in Spain. But as might have been expected, Kramnik was not in virgin territory either; after all he is the world's leading expert in the Catalan. What's more, he had been looking at this precise line that same morning. And even though he didn't like all the moves that he was making, he had no doubts. He knew this was a risky-looking line, but in the end he would be fine. There was just one small problem. He had mixed up the line they were playing with a very similar line with only one piece on a different square and before he knew it he was staring at a dead lost position. On his return to his hotel room he quickly found that his database was indeed happy with the line he had believed he was playing, whereas it considered the line he had actually gone for unplayable. For Kramnik this accident was clear proof that his head was not working properly, and although he recovered in the next few rounds, he never had the feeling that he

DAGOBERT KOHLMEYER

Ruslan Ponomariov attributed a good part of his success to the fruitful cooperation with his friend and second Zakhar Efimenko.

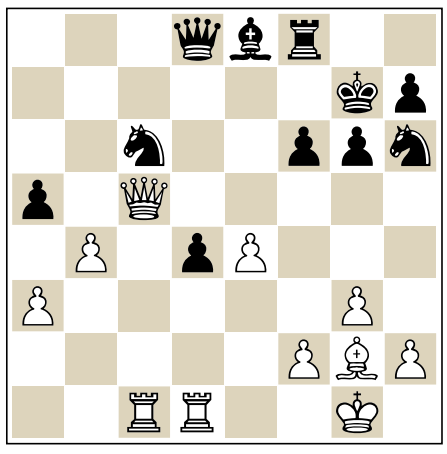
had a chance to fight for his 10th Dortmund trophy. A desperate attempt in the penultimate round even led to his second defeat. Relying on his surprise weapon these days, the Pirc, he sacrificed a piece against Naiditsch, but never got any real compensation.

Ponomariov's self-confidence evidently got a boost after this second win. He even was a bit too ambitious in his next two games. Having beaten two heavy-weights he felt that he should play aggressively against Naiditsch and Le Quang Liem. In the end he was lucky to survive against the former and lost to the latter. But he hit back in Round 5, when he outplayed Mamedyarov in a drawish ending. For the Azeri this was a heavy blow. Going by the chances that he missed and the inexplicable mistakes he made, Mamedyarov might have claimed that with some luck he could have won the tournament. He refused to do this, but no one would have blamed him if he had complained a bit. His chances took a nosedive when, in Round 5, he missed several opportunities to knock out Naiditsch and then knocked out himself with a silly blunder. In fact, he was so shocked by this loss that he asked to annotate this game instead of his fine win over Leko in Round 7 that briefly rekindled his hopes.



Mamedyarov-Leko
position after 21...♘ce7

22.♘cxb6! White happily accepts the invitation to sacrifice two knights for the black rook and two pawns. **22...♖xb6 23.♘xb6 ♕xb6 24.♕xc5 ♕d8 25.d4 exd4 26.e4 ♘h6 27.♖fd1 ♘c6 28.b4**



The weaknesses in Black's position are exploited with remarkable ease. White comfortably converts his advantage. **28...axb4 29.axb4 d3 30.♖c3 d2 31.♖c2 ♕b8 32.b5 ♘e5 33.♕c7+ ♗d7** After 33...♗f7 34.b6 the b-pawn is a painful thorn in his side. **34.♖dxd2 ♕xb5 35.f4 ♘hf7 36.fxe5 ♘xe5 37.♗f1** Soon the black queen will run out of squares. **37...♕a4 38.♖c4 ♕b5 39.♖cd4** Black resigned.

Ponomariov was close to tournament victory after a decent win over Naiditsch in Round 8. With two rounds to go he was one point ahead of Mamedyarov and Le Quang Liem, who had gotten to plus-one with a black win over Peter Leko. The way Le Quang Liem played the Caro-Kann made a deep impression on the visiting Vlastimil Hort, who spoke in high praise of the Vietnamese grandmaster. Except for a lengthy training session with Evgeny Bareev, Le Quang Liem has so far been mostly working on his own, and one can only marvel how far he will reach if he gets the opportunity to work with the kind of coaches that his talent deserves.

The pairings for the next two rounds could not have been better. First Ponomariov faced Mamedyarov with black, next Le Quang Liem with white! Mamedyarov decided to test the Ukrainian's nerves and chose an improvised pawn sacrifice that raised quite a few eyebrows. But gradually he obtained chances and in the end Ponomariov was happy to make a draw. Defending a one-point lead with the white pieces seemed a piece of cake, but here, too, nerves played an important role. The

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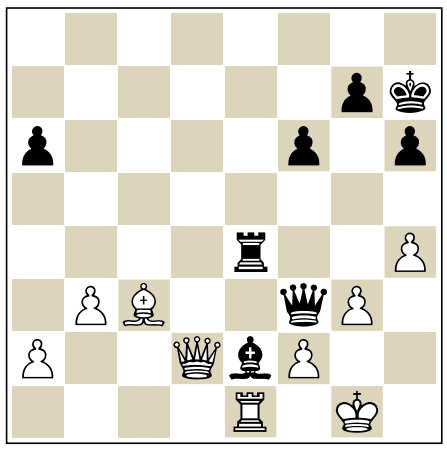
Peter Leko continues to struggle with his form. 'You get to the point where you see a mate in one and you keep checking if it's really true.'

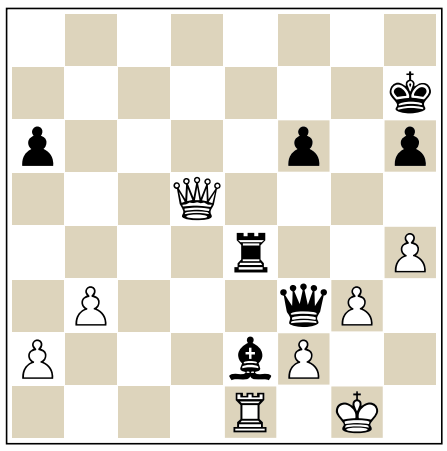
tournament leader played timidly and without a clear plan, and before he knew it Black's pieces and pawns began to occupy threatening positions. Was the amazing Le Quang Liem even going to win the tournament? Just in time Ponomariov regained his composure, and with accurate play he secured the draw and one of the finest tournament results in his career.

Apart from the draw between Ponomariov and Le Quang Liem, the last round brought two decisions. Peter Leko finally won his first game at the expense of Naiditsch, but this win could not take away the bitterness of his minus-two result and the bottom place it yielded him. The Hungarian continues to struggle with his form and seems at a loss how to break free from this crisis. He had worked hard for the event, got good positions and played well most of the time, but at the crucial moments his nerves failed him. As he put it himself: 'You get to the point where you see a mate in one and you keep checking if it's really true.' Words that almost applied to the chance he missed in his game against Kramnik in Round 3.

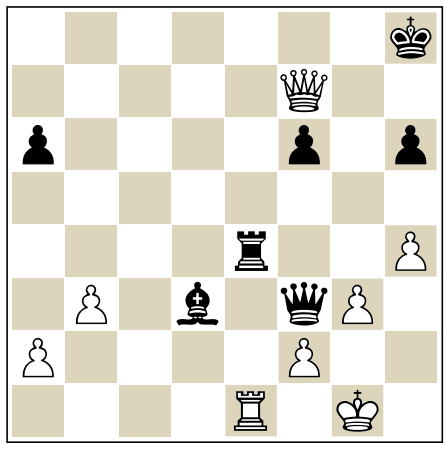


Kramnik-Leko
position after 38...♕f3

White is on the ropes. Black is threatening ...♖xh4, followed by ...♕g4+, etc., and if White pins the black rook with 39.♕c2, Black renews this threat with 39...f5. Kramnik tries his last chance:
39.♗xf6 gxf6 40.♕d5

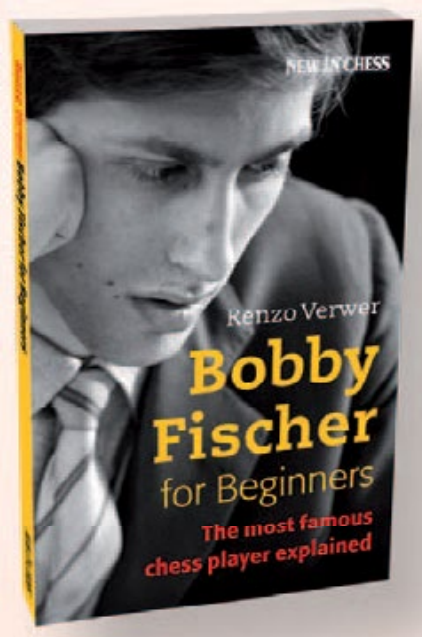


40...♗d3? Anything but this, which allows a perpetual. Black should be winning after 40...♖g4 or 40...♕g4 or 40...♔g7 41.♕b7+ ♔g8 42.♕d5+ ♔f8. **41.♕f7+ ♔h8 42.♕f8+ ♔h7 43.♕f7+ ♔h8**



44.♖c1 Rubbing it in or hoping for one more mistake? **44...♗c2 45.♕f8+ ♔h7 46.♕f7+ ♔h8 47.♕f8+** Draw.

The shortest game of the round – it lasted about an hour – was another remarkable case of 'mutual' opening preparation. Mamedyarov lost to Kramnik without a fight and blamed his loss on a novelty of the Russian, a conclusion that was not shared by Kramnik. He had been puzzled by what his opponent had been doing. They had followed the game Kramnik-Ponomariov from the Tal Memorial, and it's true that Kramnik had deviated at some point, but



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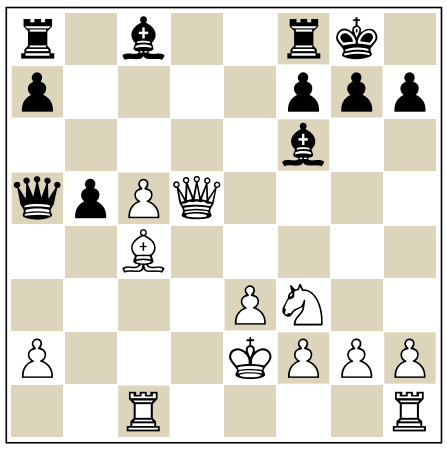
TORSTEN BEHL

In the last round Kramnik-Mamedyarov lasted about an hour and left everyone guessing what Black had been preparing.

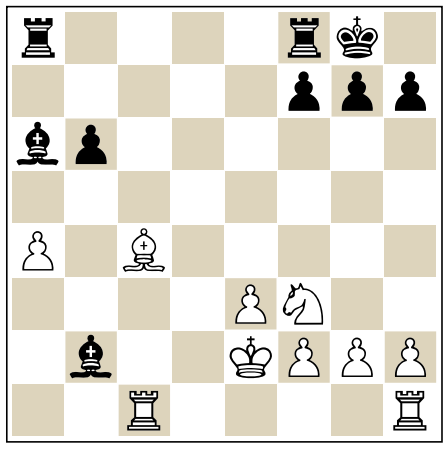
he had deviated at a point where Black was already practically lost anyway!

NI 27.9 – D38
Vladimir Kramnik
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Dortmund 2010 (10)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 c5 8.dxc5 ♕a5 9.♖c1 ♘e4 10.♕xd5 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 12.♔d1 0-0 13.♗c4 ♘f6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♔e2 b5



16.cxb6 White deviates from the game Kramnik-Ponomariov, Tal Memorial 2009, where he played the equally good 16.c6 and was winning after 16...♗a6 17.♕f5 ♕a3 18.♗d3 ♖fd8 19.c7 ♕xa2+ 20.♘d2 ♖xd3 21.♕xd3 b4 22.♔f3. **16...♕xd5 17.♗xd5 ♗a6+ 18.♗c4 axb6 19.a4** White is a pawn up and Black has little to show for his material deficit. **19...♗b2**



20.♖c2 ♖fc8 21.♘d2 b5 22.axb5 ♗xb5 23.♖b1 ♗xc4+ 24.♖xc4 ♗f6 25.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 26.♘e4 ♖e8 27.f4 ♗d4 28.exd4 ♖xe4+ 29.♔d3 f5 30.g3 ♖e7 31.♖b5 Black resigned.

Ruslan Ponomariov was delighted that he had joined the roll of honour of the Dortmund tournament, but at the same time he tried not to get overly excited. 'Life continues. After this tournament there will be new tournaments and this tournament will soon be forgotten. Maybe this is part of chess. You spend a lot of energy and then you are happy for maybe one day. But it does give you positive emotions, however briefly.' His main progress in recent years, he believes, is that he has started to see things in perspective. There's more than chess and sometimes forgetting about chess for a while is the best way to get better at it. When you play one tournament after the other, there is no time for reflection, and from time to time he wants to think about life and analyse what he is doing. He likes to go trekking with his friends in the mountains or spend time with his girlfriend. And then he enthusiastically tells about an experience that also put him in a good mood before Dortmund. Together with his girlfriend Ines, his second Zakhar Efimenko and other friends he went to the BBK Festival in Bilbao and saw a concert of the German 'industrial metal' band Rammstein. 'This concert gave me many positive emotions. It was a great show, they played for 90 minutes. Their concert was one day after Germany and Spain played in the semi-final of the World Cup, and Rammstein appeared on stage carrying big German flags. But at the end they appeared with the Basque flag for the local public. Maybe not everyone likes their music, but I like that they are trying to be original and find their own way. By singing in German, when it might be more commercial to sing in English. They have some special kind of humour, which you also see in their video clips. If I were to choose one of their songs as my favourite, it would be *Engel* (Angel).'

What can we say? It seems that Vishy Anand and his team of seconds are not the only ones that get inspired by Rammstein. Insiders have told me that many more chess players are attracted by their fat pulsating beats, droning guitars, their mesmerizingly monotonous singing and their typical German humour. It's probably only a matter of time before someone comes up with a Rammstein Variation.

NOTES BY

Ruslan Ponomariov

QI 1.3 – E00
Ruslan Ponomariov
Vladimir Kramnik
Dortmund 2010 (2)

It so happens that in recent times my games with Kramnik have been the key ones for deciding first places. Last year in Zurich I sportingly agreed a draw in a winning position, when through some malfunction the clock stopped working. Next, in the Tal Memorial we had a very complicated game with chances for both sides, but Vladimir proved the stronger. In these tournaments he took first place. The present game was played rather too early, in the second round, to talk after it about the final allocation of the places. But it certainly influenced the mood of the two players. It is always pleasant to win, especially in such style!

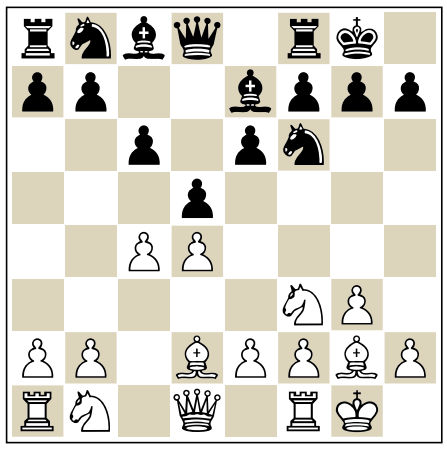
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3

With black in recent times Vladimir has been employing the Ragozin Defence, which I like to play as Black. Then in my preparations for the game I decided why not play the Catalan, in which my opponent is considered a great expert with white.

3...♗b4+

In recent times in my opponent's games we have more often seen the variation 3...d5 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.♗g2 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 a5, but after the 4th game of the Anand-Topalov match in Sofia, Black has experienced some problems in this variation.

4.♗d2 ♗e7 5.♗g2 d5 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6



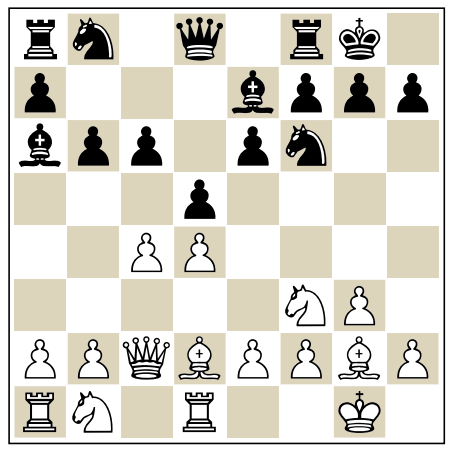
8.♕c2

An ultra-solid move, securely defending the c4 pawn. Earlier this year, against Grischuk in Nice, I played 8.♗f4, but then one must seriously reckon with the interesting idea 8...dxc4!? 9.♘e5 b5 10.♘xc6 ♘xc6 11.♗xc6 ♗d7 12.♗xa8 ♕xa8, which again was tested in the Anand-Topalov match.**8...b6**

9.♖d1 ♗a6

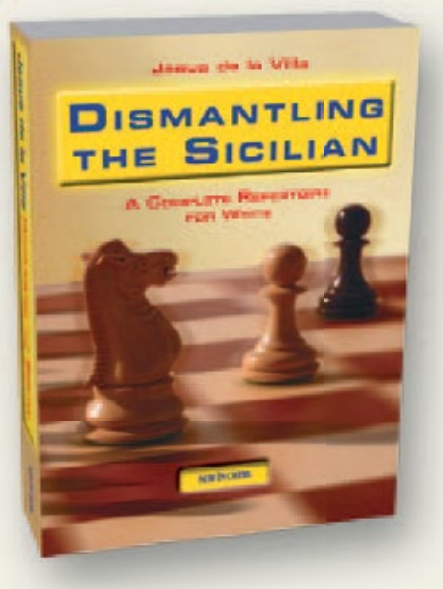
Vladimir insists that my move order has been inaccurate and he tries to transpose into lines of the Queen's Indian Defence.

9...♘bd7 10.♗f4 ♗a6 11.♘e5 could have been played, and now not by analogy with Kramnik 11...♕c8, but 11...♖c8, which transposes into my game with Grischuk, where Black has quite a solid position.



10.♘e5!?

It was hard for anyone to expect that the given variation would occur in this tournament. But strangely enough, two weeks before the start of Dortmund, my second Zakhar Efimenko and I studied it at a training session in Spain, and we came to the conclusion that instead of the more usual 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.♗f4 (or 11.a4),



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Arbiter Alexander Bakh starts Ruslan Ponomariov's clock for the key game against Vladimir Kramnik in Round 2.

leading to a Queen's Indian Defence, it would be interesting to try the move in the game. White prepares to open the centre with e2-e4 and he tries to save time on the move b2-b3, but the play becomes very concrete and he has to calculate move by move in order to hope for an advantage.

10...♕c8?!

I must honestly admit that this very first move by Black is one that we did not expect, and after this the play became spontaneous. But it is not possible to anticipate and analyse everything. Black has far more often chosen 10...♘fd7, aiming to get rid of the annoying knight in the centre on e5 as soon as possible.

11.♘c3

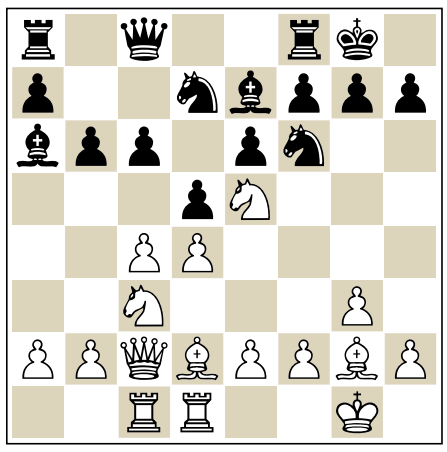
After this my opponent began thinking for a long time over his moves, and it became clear that his previous move was most probably improvisation, rather than the result of purposeful opening preparation.

11...♘bd7

Not good was 11...dxc4 12.♘e4, when to hold on to the extra pawn (and otherwise there is no point in conceding the centre) Black is forced to go in for new weaknesses – 12...b5 13.♘c5.

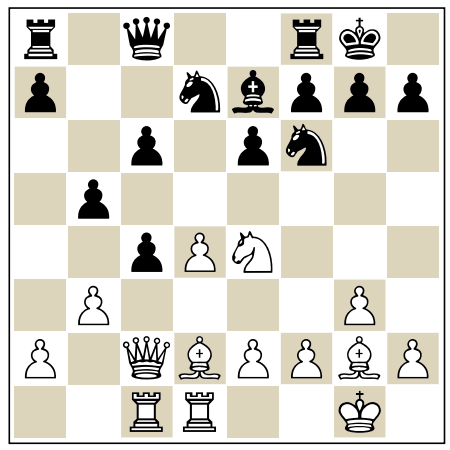
12.♖ac1

Previously 12.♗f4 occurred. Strictly speaking the move in the game is a novelty. But what can be more natural that the development of the pieces? In addition, the rook on c1 emphasizes the bad position of the black queen on c8. However, before playing this I had to assess the consequences of the exchange on e5. When I saw the subsequent idea of the sacrifice on d5, I simply could not restrain myself from playing it.



12...♘xe5

In the light of what happened in the game, 12...♗xc4!? 13.♘xc4 dxc4 looks safer. Of course, White has typical Catalan compensation for the pawn, but it is not so easy to develop his initiative. The following development of events is possible, for example: 14.♘e4 (14.b3 cxb3 15.♕xb3 ♕b7; 14.e4 b5 15.d5 e5) 14...b5 15.b3



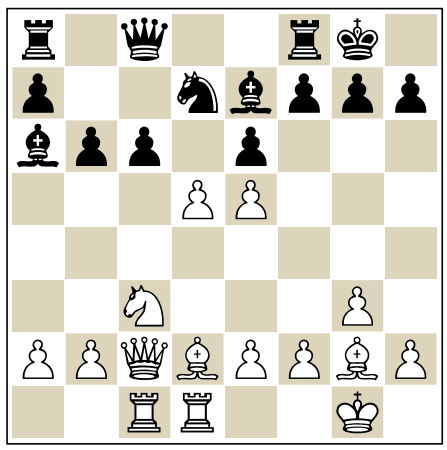
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

15...♘b6! 16.♘xf6+ (16.♗a5 ♘fd5!) 16...♗xf6 17.♗a5 ♖d8 18.bxc4 bxc4 19.♗xb6 axb6 20.♕xc4 ♕a6 21.♕xa6 ♖xa6 22.♖xc6 ♖xa2 23.e3 ♖b2, when White's pieces are slightly more active and he has the more compact pawn structure, but the opposite-coloured bishops give Black quite good drawing chances.

13.dxe5 ♘d7

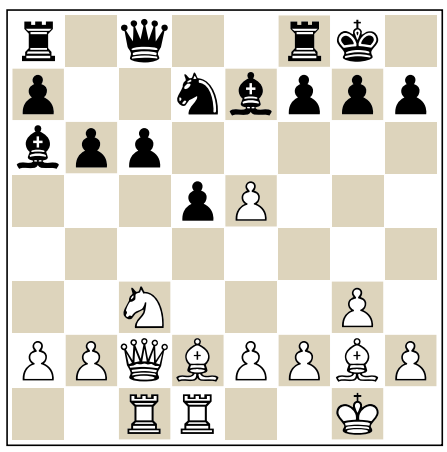
After 13...♘g4 White has several tempting continuations: both 14.♗h3!?, with the idea of 14...♘xe5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♘xd5!, and 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.♕a4, when after 15...♕c4 he has the strong reply 16.b4!.

14.cxd5



14...cxd5

The natural reply. In the process of analysis, when pawns are exchanged they are often removed from the board automatically. But possibly 14...exd5 should have been considered, with the aim of safeguarding the queen on the c-file. I would probably have chosen between:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

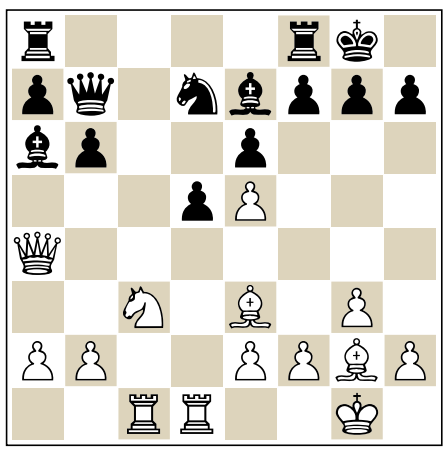
A) 15.♗f4 g5 16.♗e3 ♘xe5 17.♗d4 ♕e6 18.e4 dxe4 19.♗xe4 f5 20.♗g2 ♗f6 (20...♖ad8 21.♕a4) 21.♗xe5 ♗xe5 22.♘d5 ♗b7 23.♘b4 ♖ac8 24.♗xc6 ♖c7 25.♕a4 f4 26.♖c2;

B) and 15.b4!? ♘xe5 16.b5 ♗xb5 17.♘xb5 cxb5 18.♗c3 ♘g4 19.♗xd5 ♗a3 20.♗xa8 ♗xc1 21.♕xc1 b4 22.♗xb4 ♕xc1 23.♖xc1 ♖xa8 24.f3 ♘f6 25.e4.

In both cases, as often happens in the Catalan, White retains a small advantage, but also Black is not yet close to a draw.

15.♗f4

As I have already said, the idea of sacrificing a piece on d5 gripped my imagination when I was making my 12th move. To judge by the development of events and the final result, from the practical standpoint this was the correct decision. In the end Vladimir failed to cope with the problems posed. But, nevertheless, the quieter and more prosaic 15.♕a4!? was probably stronger: 15...♕b7 (15...♘c5 is bad because of 16.♕g4 with numerous threats) 16.♗e3

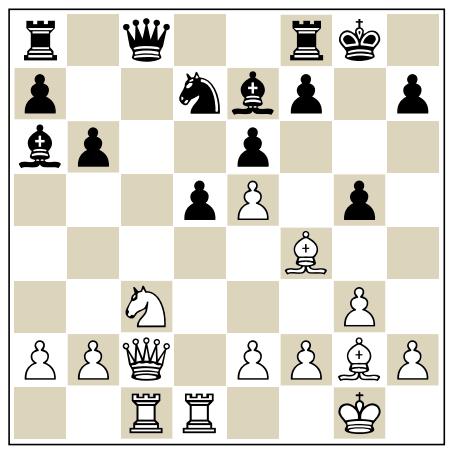


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

with the idea after almost any move by Black of capturing with the knight on d5. (There is also the flamboyant 16.♗h6!? gxh6 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♗xd5 ♕b8 19.♕xa6 ♘xe5, but again a pretty move proves in the end to be not the strongest.) In the ending after 16...b5 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♗xd5 ♕xd5 19.♕xa6 ♘b8 20.♖xd5 ♘xa6 21.♖xb5 ♖fc8 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♗xa7 the four white pawns look stronger than the black knight.

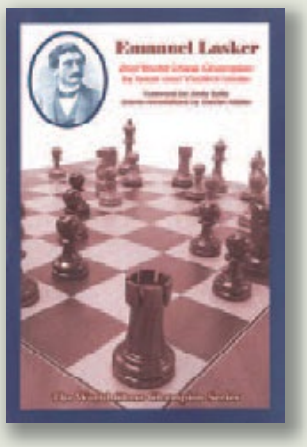
15...g5

Risky, but there are no longer any alternatives, since White wants simply to play e2-e4 with fearfully strong activity.



16.♗xd5!?

Carrying out my basic idea. It was amusing to see later on the Internet site ChessVibes a caricature associated with this move. Of course, it was possible to manage with the temporary sacrifice of only a pawn by 16.♗e3 ♘xe5, but in all the variations, with accurate play, it would appear that Black can hold the position:



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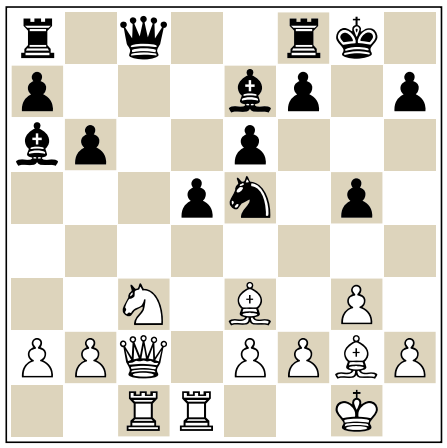
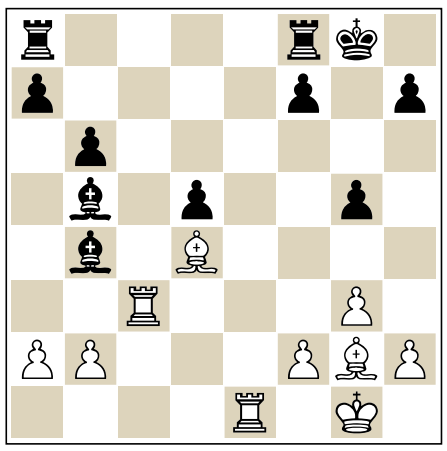


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 17.♕a4 ♘c4 18.♘xd5 exd5 19.♖xd5 b5! 20.♖xb5 ♗xb5 21.♕xb5 ♖b8 22.♕xc4 ♕xc4 23.♖xc4 ♖xb2;

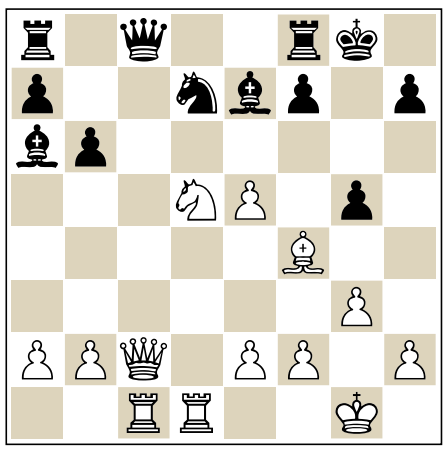
B) 17.♗d4 ♘c6! (only not 17...♘g6 because of 18.♕a4! ♕c4 19.b4! ♖fc8 20.h4) 18.♘xd5 exd5 19.♕xc6 ♕xc6 20.♖xc6 ♗xe2 21.♖e1 ♗b5 22.♖c3 ♗b4!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

23.♖e5 h6 24.♖b3 ♖ac8 25.h4 ♖c1+! 26.♔h2 ♖c4 27.♗e3 gxh4 28.♗xh6 ♖e8 29.♖xd5 ♗c6 30.♖g5+ ♔h7 31.♗xc6 ♖xc6 32.♖xb4 hxg3+ 33.♖xg3 ♖xh6+ 34.♔g2 ♖g6 with a complete exhaustion of the fighting resources and a draw.

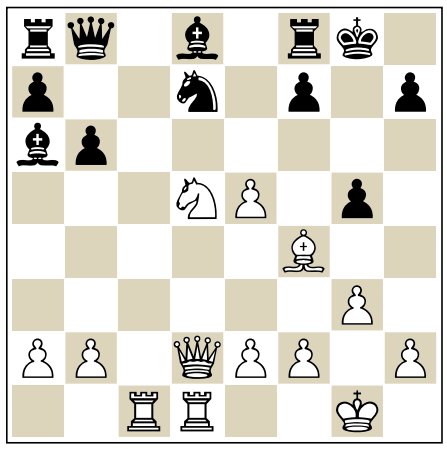
16...exd5 17.♘xd5



17...♕d8?

Vladimir cracks under the pressure and collapses within literally three moves. I am sure that, had Magnus Carlsen been in his place, he would have been able to retain his composure and calculate the variations, as I personally realized at the tournament in Bazna.

17...♗d8! 18.♕d2 (18.♕f5 ♘c5!) 18...♕b8 was correct, when a direct win for White is not apparent, if he has any advantage at all:

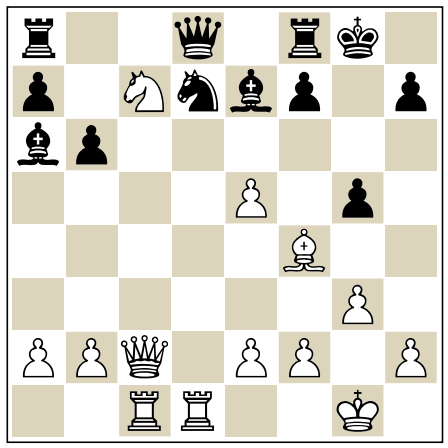


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

19.e6 (19.♗xg5 ♕xe5!) 19...gxf4 20.e7!? ♕e5! (in all the variations the most important thing is to centralize the queen, in order to control as much as possible) 21.exf8♕+ ♘xf8 22.♕xf4 ♕xf4 23.♘xf4 ♘g6, and in the ending the two bishops are quite sufficient compensation for the rook and two pawns. It is important only not to allow White to exchange a pair of rooks. If White plays too sharply, Black can even think about trying to seize the initiative.

18.♘c7

The computer considers that positional play a piece down was even stronger: 18.♗e3 ♘c5 (18...♘xe5 19.♕f5 ♕d6 20.♘c7!; 18...♖c8? 19.♕xc8! ♗xc8 20.♖xc8 winning) 19.b4! ♘e6 20.♕c6!! with domination of the entire board. But during play such resources are rather difficult to find, and in the game I decided simply to regain part of the material.



18...♖c8??

The decisive mistake. The tension in the game would have been maintained by 18...gxf4, when White would have to rise to the occasion:

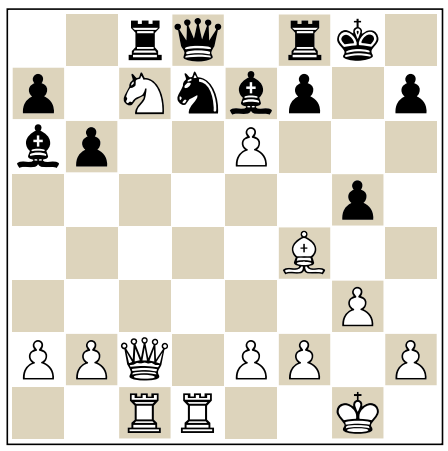
A) 19.♘xa6 is incorrect: 19...fxg3 20.hxg3 ♗g5! 21.f4 ♗xf4 22.gxf4 ♔h8 and unexpectedly Black himself launches a counterattack;

B) the quiet 19.♕f5 ♗c8 20.♘xa8 fxg3 21.hxg3 ♘c5 22.♖xd8 ♗xf5 23.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 24.♘c7 leads to an endgame where White's chances are preferable;

C) 19.♘xa8!? (the most greedy capture, and seemingly the strongest) 19...♗c5 (19...fxg3 20.hxg3 ♗g5 21.♘c7 ♗xc1 22.♘xa6 favours White) 20.b4 ♕xa8 21.♖xd7! ♗c8 22.e6! ♗xd7 23.exd7 ♗xb4 24.♕f5 ♗c5 25.♖c4 and despite all the simplifications White has a very dangerous initiative.

19.e6!

I only shouldn't play 19.♕c6? immediately, because of 19...♘b8 20.♕h6 gxf4 21.♖xd8 ♗xd8, and for the queen Black acquires too many pieces.



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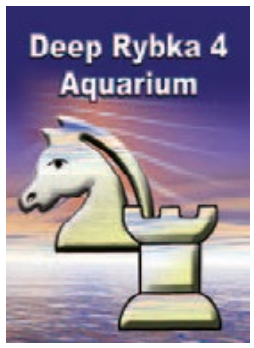

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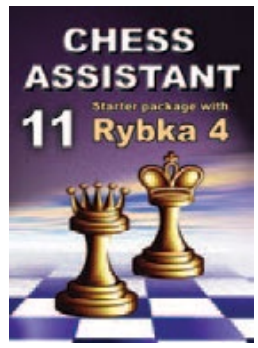

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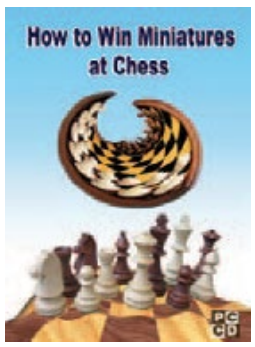

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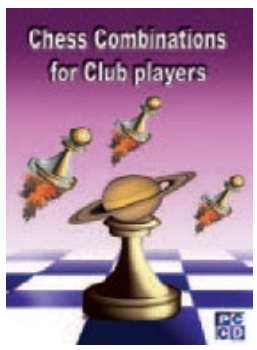

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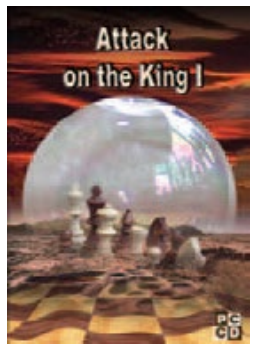

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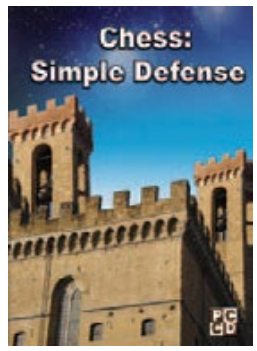

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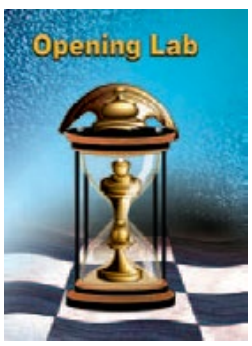

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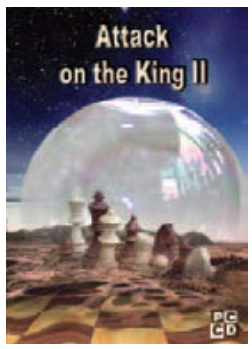

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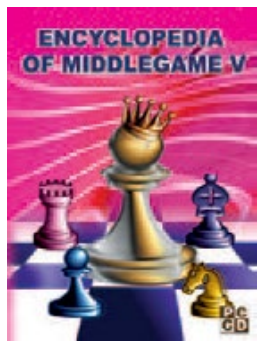

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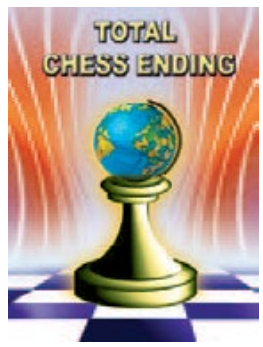

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19...fxe6

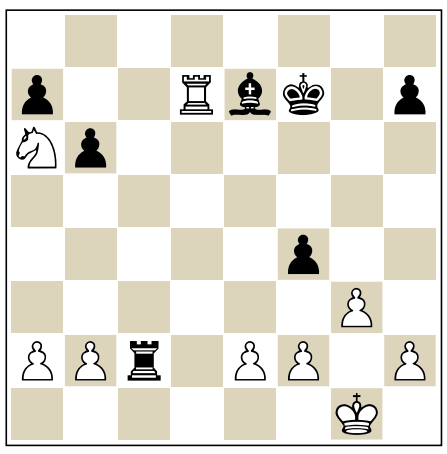
No hopes were offered by 19...gxf4 20.♖xd7 ♖xc7 21.♕xc7 ♕xc7 22.♖cxc7 ♗f6 23.e7! ♖e8 24.♖xa7 ♗xe2 25.♖d8 ♖xd8 26.exd8♕+ ♗xd8 27.♖a8 and White wins.

20.♕c6 Black has too many pieces hanging, and great loss of material is unavoidable.

20...♕e8 21.♕xe6+

21.♖xd7 was also not bad, but the endgame with two extra pawns, which arises by force, also fully satisfied me.

21...♕f7 22.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 22...♖xf7 is met by 23.♘xa6 ♖xc1 24.♗xc1!. **23.♘xa6 gxf4 24.♖xc8 ♖xc8 25.♖xd7 ♖c2**



White is two pawns up and therefore Black's last hope is the activity of his rook, but it is quite easily neutralized.

26.♘b4

Bringing out the knight with the intention of attacking the bishop on e7; in passing the rook is also attacked.

26...♖xb2 27.♘c6 ♖xe2 28.♖xa7

Black's position is absolutely hopeless and he can resign with a clear conscience. But as though through inertia he continues making moves.

28...f3 29.h4 h5 30.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 31.♘xe7 ♔xe7 32.g4 hxg4 33.♔h2 ♔e6 34.♔g3 ♔f5 35.a4 ♔e4 36.♔xg4

Black resigned. This win not only lifted me into sole first place, but also gave me psychological confidence in my powers, which became the foundation of my successful overall performance.

NOTES BY

Le Quang Liem

CK 4.11 – B12
Peter Leko
Le Quang Liem
Dortmund 2010 (5)

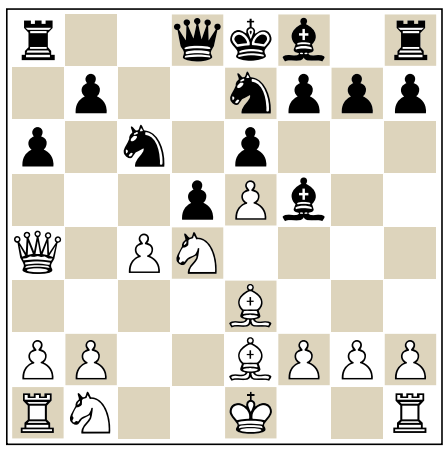
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

The Advance Variation of the Caro-Kann. Its theory has developed rapidly of late, and the lines are usually quite long. Only thorough home preparation can provide good novelties.

3...♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 c5 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘e7 8.c4

8.♘d2 is an alternative, but that's another story.

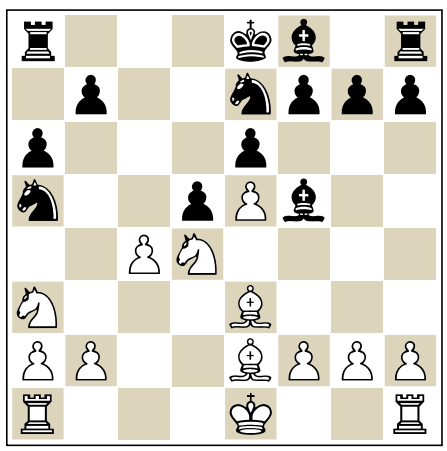
8...♘bc6 9.♕a4 a6



10.♘a3

More common is 10.♘c3, followed by 10...dxc4 11.0-0-0 ♕a5 12.♕xa5 ♘xa5 13.♘xf5 ♘xf5 14.♗b6 ♘c6 15.f4 ♖c8, with a complicated position. There are many possibilities for both sides. People have tried a lot of ideas, but so far Black holds in all lines.

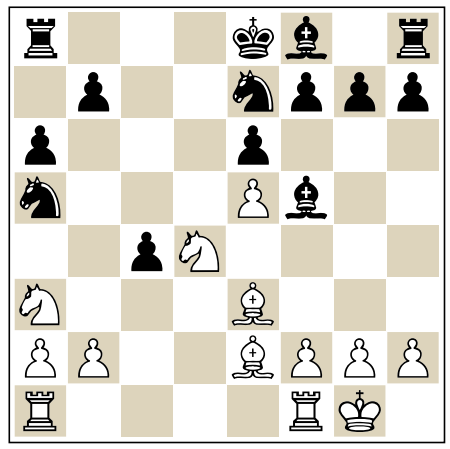
10...♕a5+ 11.♕xa5 ♘xa5



12.0-0

If 12.cxd5 then 12...♘xd5! 13.♘xf5 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 exf5 15.♘c2 ♘c6 16.f4 0-0-0, and this looks equal.

12...dxc4



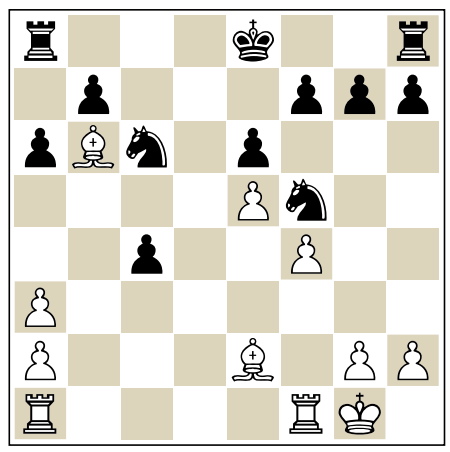
13.♘xf5

Here is the novelty! I had had a quick look at this move at home, and had concluded that there was no problem for Black. However, at this stage Leko played very quickly and confidently, so I was sure he had found something.

Before, people tried 13.♘xc4 ♘xc4 14.♗xc4, but after 14...♗e4! 15.♖fc1 ♗d5 16.♗e2 ♖c8 Black had nothing to worry about.

13...♘xf5 14.♗b6 ♗xa3 15.bxa3 ♘c6 16.f4

The last few moves were more or less forced. Here I had to make a decision.



16...g5!

White has sacrificed a pawn to secure the bishop pair, but it's only temporary. He will regain the pawn soon, and during that time Black has to exchange one bishop. Alternatively, 16...c3 17.♖ac1

♘fd4 18.♗d3 c2 19.♔f2 0-0 20.♔e3 ♘f5+ 21.♗xf5 exf5 22.♖xc2 favours White.
And 16...♘cd4 17.♗xc4 ♘e3 (bad is 17...♘c2? 18.♖ac1 ♘ce3 19.♖fe1 ♘xc4 20.♖xc4) 18.♗xd4 ♘xc4 19.♖fc1 b5 20.a4 is also better for White.

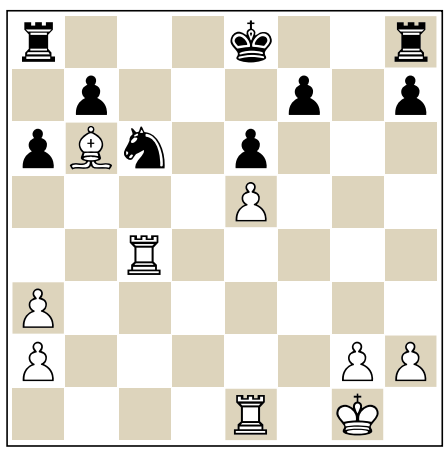
17.♗xc4

17.fxg5 ♘xe5 18.♖xf5? does not work, because of 18...exf5 19.♗d4 0-0 20.♗xe5 ♖fe8.

17...gxf4 18.♖ae1

18.♖xf4 ♘xe5 19.♗d5 ♘d6 20.♗c7 (20.♗d4 ♘g6) 20...♔d7 21.♗xd6 ♔xd6 22.♗xb7 ♖a7 gives Black a pleasant position.

18...♘e3 19.♖xf4 ♘xc4 20.♖xc4



20...♖g8

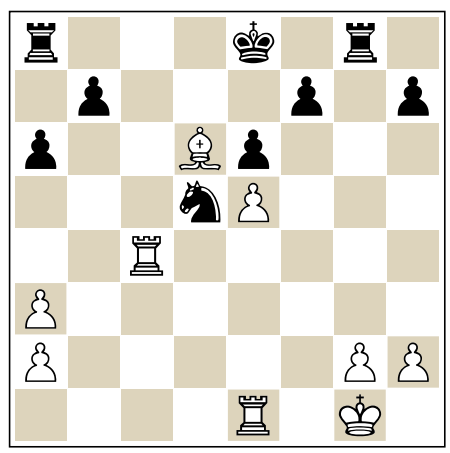
I think I had managed to equalize here. White's bishop looks stronger than Black's knight, but that may not be true. There is no way for White to penetrate on the queenside, while he has to take care of his own weakness, the e5 pawn.
20...♖c8 may also be playable, but I see no reason why Black should go for it in any hurry. Firstly, the rook may get into a pin. And secondly, it seems to me that activating the kingside rook is more important.

21.♗c7 ♘e7

Once the bishop leaves the b-file, White has the threat of an attack on the b7 pawn, which means that my knight has to leave c6 immediately, taking the chance that White will have no time for ♖c7.

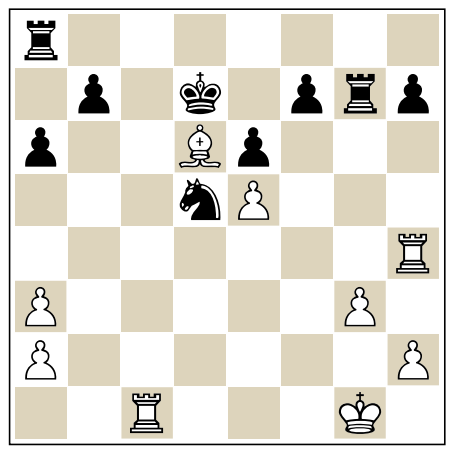
22.♗d6 22.♖b4 is met by 22...b5.

22...♘d5



The knight is perfectly placed on d5. It not only covers the c7-square, but can also create threats on the kingside.

23.♖h4 ♖g7 24.♖c1 ♔d7 25.g3

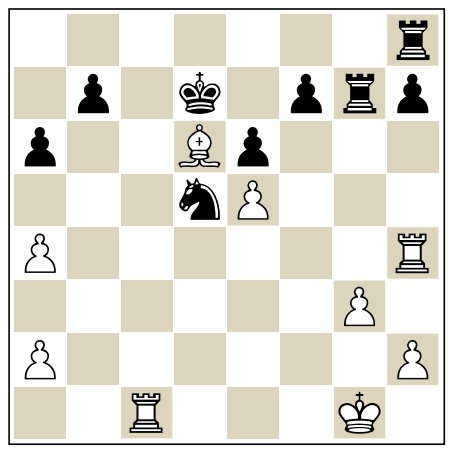


25...♖h8

With this move I threaten to play ...h5 and ...♖g4 (or ...♖g5), and to improve the position of my rook. Only then can I afford to think about swapping rooks on the c-file, or to play ...f6 (or ...f5) at the right moment. Exchanging a pair of rooks would be a positional mistake for Black, of course, as the g7 rook may have to defend passively for a long time. After 25...♖c8 26.♖xc8 ♔xc8 27.♔f2 ♔d7 28.♔f3 White has the initiative.

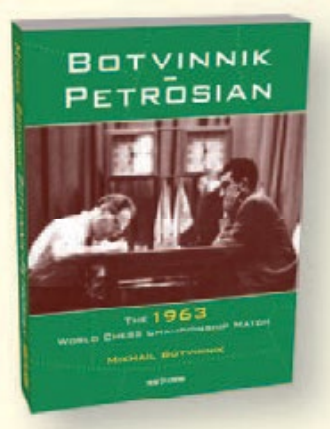
26.a4

White tries to open up the queenside.



26...a5

Obviously, I had to lock the queenside. After this move White has no chance to open it. Everything is well protected: the b-pawn will soon go to b6 to protect the a5 pawn; the knight covers c7 and b6, the rook covers c8. White's bishop is nicely placed, but it has no business there. The initiative slowly passes to me. I start playing for a win!
26...h5 27.♖b1 b6 28.a5 b5 29.



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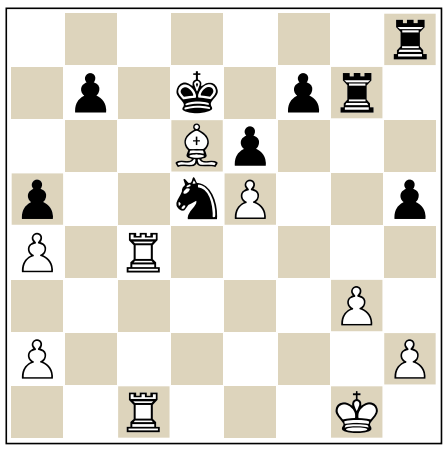
a4 is exactly what White would dream about.

27.♖hc4 h5

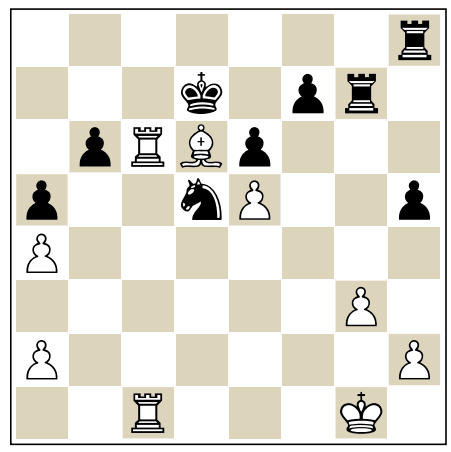


28.♖c5

The exchange sacrifice 28.♖c7+ does not work in view of 28...♘xc7 29.♖xc7+ ♔d8 30.♖xb7 ♖hg8 31.♖b5 (31.♔f2 f5) 31...h4 32.♖xa5 hxg3 33.h4 ♔d7, and Black is clearly better.

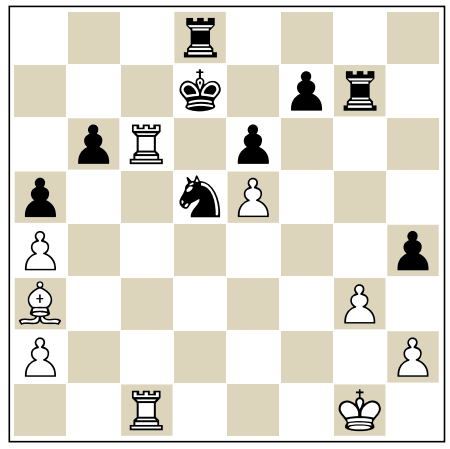
28...b6 The hasty 28...h4? only leads to perpetual check: 29.♖xa5 hxg3 30.h4! ♖xh4 31.♖a7 g2 32.♖xb7+ ♔d8 33.♖b8+.

29.♖c6



29...h4?! Possibly better was 29...♖g4 30.♗a3 ♖d8 31.♖1c4 ♖xc4 32.♖xc4 ♖g8 33.♔f2 ♖g4 34.♖xg4 hxg4, when Black certainly has pressure, but White may have some drawing chances.

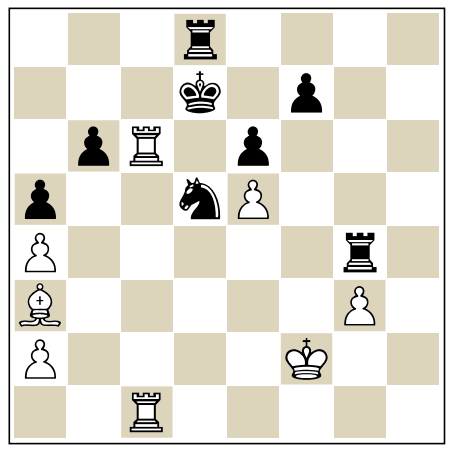
30.♗a3 ♖d8



31.♔f2? We had both missed 31.♖1c4!, which was the only chance to save White: 31...hxg3 32.h4 g2 33.♗c1 ♖g3 34.♗g5 ♖b8 35.♖c2 ♖f3 36.♖d6+ ♔e8 37.♖xg2 ♖f5 38.h5 ♖xe5 39.h6 f6 40.♗c1 ♖e1+ 41.♔h2 ♖xc1 42.♖g8+ ♔e7 43.♖xb8 ♔xd6 44.h7 ♖c2+, with a draw.

31...hxg3+ 32.hxg3 ♖g4

I think that from this point on I was winning, although it was still complicated.



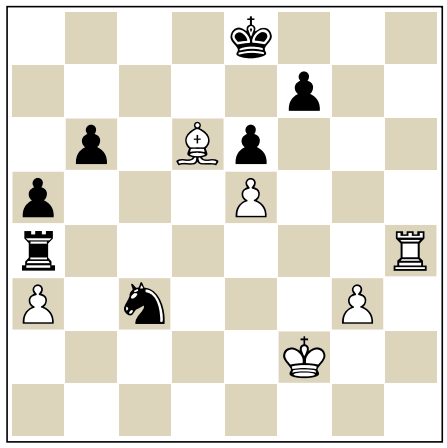
33.♖d6+

33.♖1c4 ♖xc4 34.♖xc4 ♖h8 35.♔g1 (35.♖h4 ♖c8) 35...♖c8 36.♖xc8 ♔xc8 was the reason why my opponent did not like 33.♖1c4.

33...♔e8 34.♖h1 ♖xd6 35.♗xd6 ♖xa4 36.a3 ♘c3 37.♖h4?

Even the best defence, 37.♔e3 ♖g4 38.♔f3 ♖d4 39.♖h8+ ♔d7

40.♖h7 ♔c6 41.♖xf7 ♖d3+, still leaves Black with winning chances.



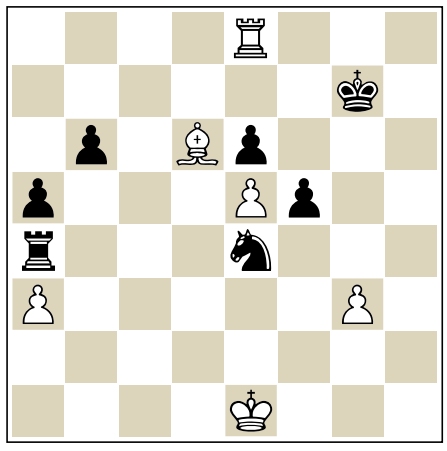
37...f5?

Here, I could have won much more easily by exchanging rooks: 37...♖xh4 38.gxh4 f5 39.♔f3 ♘d5. The knight stays beautifully on d5, supporting both the f- and b-pawns, while the black king only has to stop White's h-pawn.

38.♖h8+ ♔f7 39.♖f8+ ♔g7 40.♖e8 ♘e4+

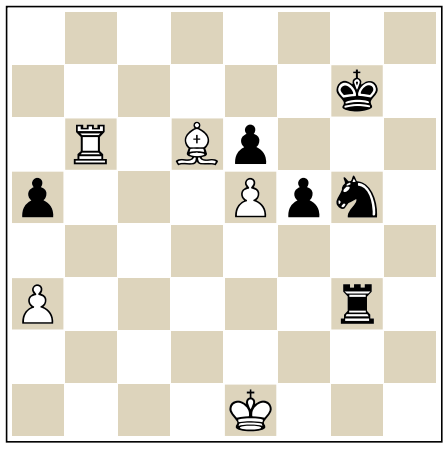
Fortunately, despite my mistake on move 37, the position was still winning for Black. I only had to play carefully and accurately.

41.♔e1



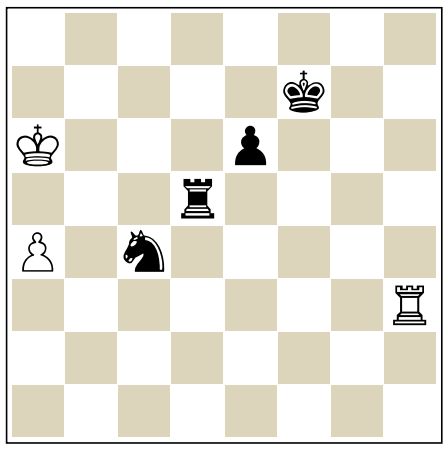
41...♘g5 I have to keep the e6 pawn, of course. The b6 pawn will be exchanged for the g3 pawn. Then my f-pawn will advance with the support of my rook and knight, combined with some mating threats. Soon White will have to sacrifice his bishop for that pawn, after which the rest is simple.

42.♖b8 ♖g4 43.♖xb6 ♖xg3



44.♖a6 44.♗e7 runs into 44...♘e4.

44...f4 45.♖xa5 ♖g1+ 46.♔f2 ♘h3+ 47.♔f3 ♖g3+ 48.♔e4 f3 49.♗c5 f2 50.♗xf2 ♘xf2+ 51.♔d4 ♔g6 52.♖a8 ♖d3+ 53.♔c4 ♖d5 54.♖g8+ ♔f7 55.♖g3 ♘e4 56.♖h3 ♘c5 57.♔b5 ♘d7+ 58.♔a6 ♘xe5 59.a4 ♘c4



And finally Leko resigned. My best game in Dortmund! ☺

NOTES BY

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

SL 9.6 – D37
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Arkady Naiditsch
Dortmund 2010 (6)

I should like to analyse this game because if I had won it I would have been close to first place.

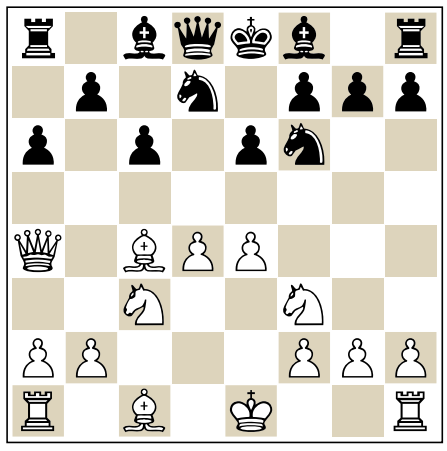
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.♕a4+

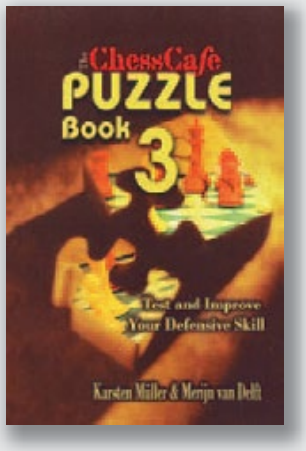
This move is not very popular, but it has the advantage that players who do not play the Slav Defence avoid many positions, for example, 5...c6 6.♕xc4 b5.

5...♘bd7 Of course, in this position Black has no problems, but the position itself also has a great deal of theory.

6.e4 a6 7.♗xc4 c6

Here I knew of the existence of two main moves, 7...♖b8 and 7...c6. Of course, against both of these I prepared some variations, but in the main I looked through some old games, and I realized what an interesting position White obtains with his next move.





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Shakhriyar Mamedyarov: 'It was a great pity to suffer such a defeat, but we are professionals, and none of us is guaranteed against this – it can happen to anyone.'

8.♕d1

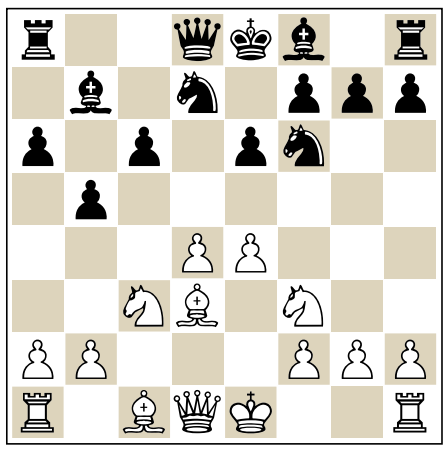
When I was preparing for this game, one of the games that I studied was Kasparov-Short, London 1993 (rapid). In this game 8.♕d1 was played. This move made a strong impression on me, because many players choose 8.♕c2. The main idea of the move is to transpose into the Meran Variation.

8...b5 9.♗d3

A well-known Meran position has been reached.

9...♗b7?

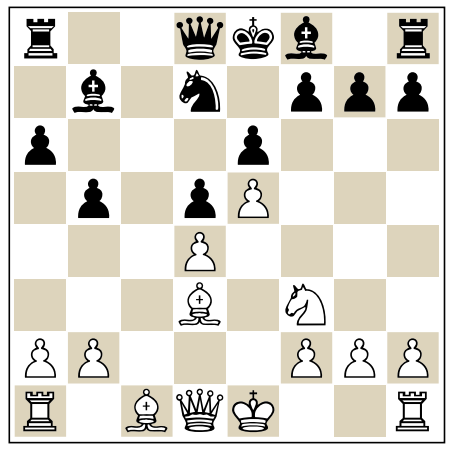
Of course, my opponent should have played 9...c5 and transposed into the main variation of the Meran Variation, but he refrained from this, since the Meran is not his main opening.



10.e5!

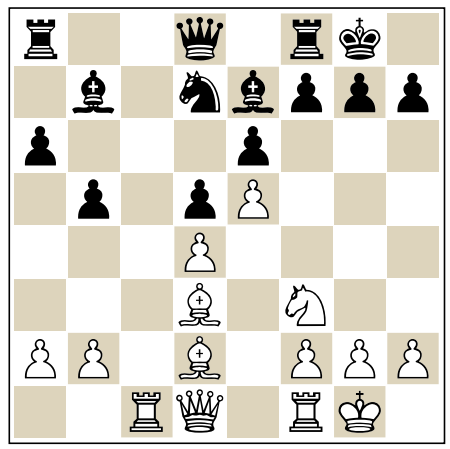
White must prevent c6-c5 and ensure that the bishop on b7 remains completely passive.

10...♘d5 11.♘xd5 cxd5



12.♘g5!?

This is not the only way of gaining an advantage. This can also be achieved with simpler moves, since White has a very strong light-squared bishop and a pawn on e5, whereas Black has a very weak light-squared bishop and in the future his king may come under attack. After the simple moves 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖c1 White has a big advantage, in view of the fact that Black does not know what to do.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

14...♖e8 (the aim of this move is to play the knight to f8 and defend the pawn on h7, without creating weaknesses on the kingside; if 14...♖c8 15.♖xc8 ♕xc8 16.♘g5 h6 17.♘h3 White is clearly better) 15.h4! ♗xh4 (15...h6 16.♘h2! ♗xh4 17.♕g4 with a very strong attack) 16.♘xh4 ♕xh4 17.♖c7 ♗c8 18.f4, with a clear white advantage.

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6	Peter Leko	IGM HUN 2734	0 ½	0 ½	½ ½	½ 0	½ 1	* *	4	2658

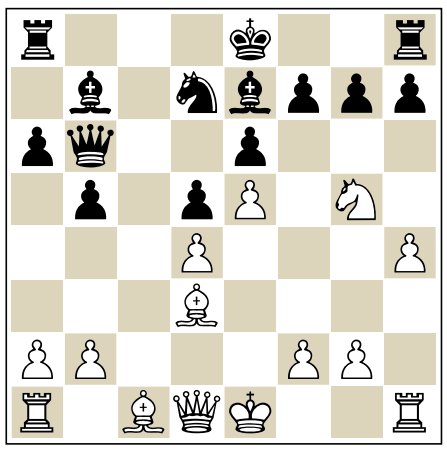
12...♗e7

After 12...♗b4+ 13.♔f1 White is also quite well placed, but in any case Black should have played this, in order to keep the king in the centre and not allow it to castle later.

13.h4

13.♕g4 retains an advantage after 13...♖c8 (13...♕a5+ 14.♔e2) 14.♗d2 h5 15.♕g3.

13...♕b6



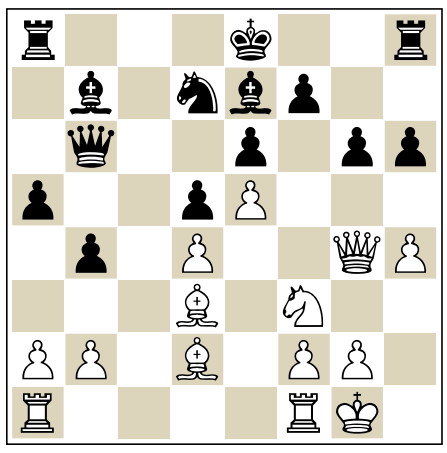
14.♕g4

During the game I thought that 14.♗e3 was stronger, but for some reason I decided that by playing f7-f5 my opponent would gain some chances, whereas if I were to play 14.♕g4 he would not gain any chances at all: 14...f5 15.exf6 ♘xf6 16.♘xh7! (I saw this move during the game, but I thought that it would give my opponent some counterplay, whereas in fact White simply wins a pawn) 16...♘xh7 17.♕h5+ ♔d7 18.♗xh7 ♕a5+ 19.♔e2 ♖af8 20.♕g6 ♗f6 21.h5 ♕b4 22.b3 ♗xd4 23.♖h4.

14...h6 15.♘f3 g6 16.♗d2 a5

16...0-0-0 17.0-0 ♔b8 18.♖fc1 ♖c8 19.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 20.♕f4 ♖h7 21.♖c1 also favours White.

17.0-0 b4

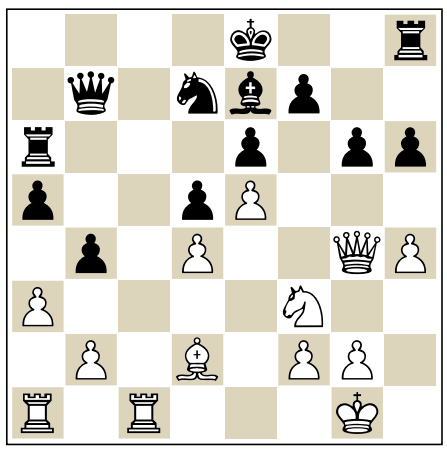


18.a3!

White must create additional weaknesses, and subsequently open the a-file or exchange pawns on the a-file.

18...♗a6 Black's only chance is to exchange my light-square bishop, to simplify the position and avoid any sacrifices in the future.

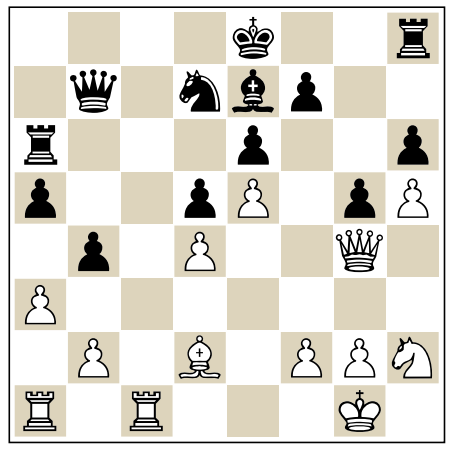
19.♗xa6 ♖xa6 20.♖fc1 ♕b7



21.h5

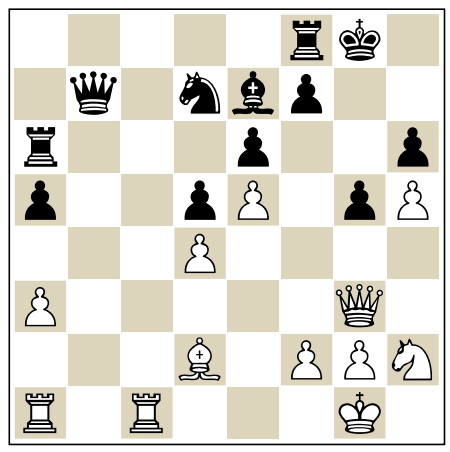
After the game Arkady said to me that this move was incorrect, in his opinion, since it gives Black the chance to castle and obtain some counterplay. Possibly there is some truth in his words, since if Black is unable to castle, his rook cannot come into play and the position of his king will become even worse. Better was 21.axb4! axb4 22.♖xa6 ♕xa6 23.♕f4 ♕b7 24.b3 ♔f8 25.♘h2 ♔g7 26.♘g4 g5 27.♕e3.

21...g5 22.♘h2



When I went in for this position I thought that Black would be unable to castle, as his king's position would be very weak and at any moment it could come under a mating attack.

22...bxa3 23.bxa3 0-0 24.♕g3



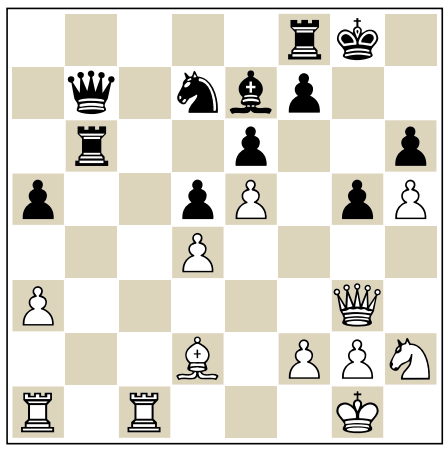
I preferred this position and even considered it to be winning. Apparently my evaluation of the position subsequently became the cause of my defeat.

24...♕b2?!

At this point my opponent was already seriously short of time. I have attached the question mark because the move was in fact weak, whereas the exclamation mark in-

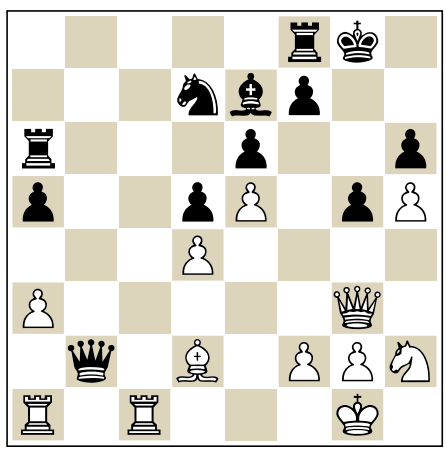
dicates that after this move I began thinking that I would easily win the game, and therefore my subsequent play was poor.

After 24...♖b6!? White would need to play accurately in order to finally consolidate his advantage:



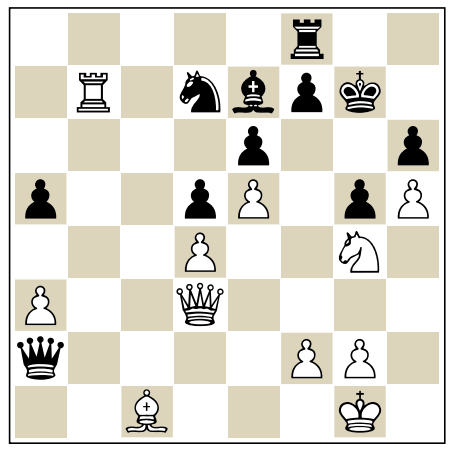
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

25.f4! ♖b3 26.♘f3 (White's attack is very strong) 26...♕b6! 27.♔h2, and White is clearly better.



25.♘f3?

Starting from this point I began playing some ridiculous moves. The return of the knight to f3 simply cannot be explained, as 25.♕d3! would have won. Of course, I considered this move, but after 25...♖c6 I did not see a win for me, although in fact it was all very simple: 26.♖ab1! ♖xc1+ 27.♗xc1 ♕a2 28.♘g4 ♔g7 29.♖b7



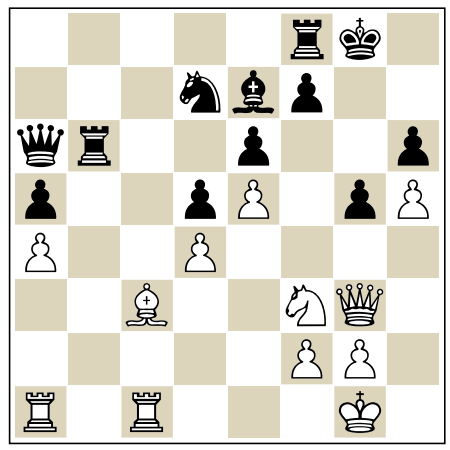
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

29...♕a1 (after 29...♖d8 30.♗b2! the queen has no move, and here Black loses very simply; if 30...♕c4 31.♕xc4 dxc4 32.d5) 30.♖c7! ♘c5 31.dxc5 ♕xc1+ 32.♔h2 ♖e8 33.♘f6 ♕f4+ 34.g3 ♕xf2+ 35.♔h3 ♗xf6 36.♕g6+ ♔h8 (36...♔f8 37.♖xf7 mate) 37.♕xh6+ ♔g8 38.♕xf6 ♕xf6 39.exf6 e5 40.♖e7.

25...♖b6!

Black plays correctly; now he has possible counterplay on the b-file.

26.♗c3 ♕b5 27.a4 ♕a6



28.♗d2!

White prepares a sacrifice on g5 and vacates the c-file for his rook.

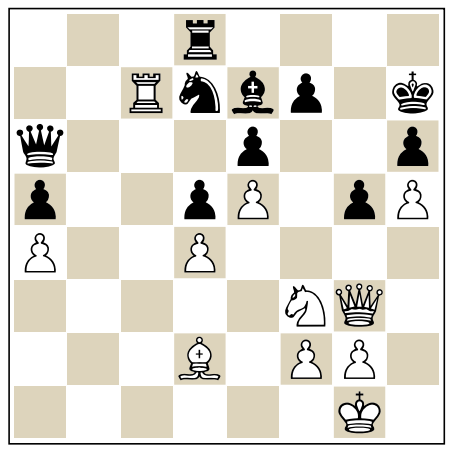
28...♔h7 29.♖c7 ♖b7 30.♖ac1

Of course, in this position I should have captured the pawn without any risk, 30.♗xa5, and continued playing, in view of the fact that Arkady was short of time, and with simple moves I could have created great problems for him: 30...♖a8 31.♖xb7 ♕xb7 32.♗d2 ♕b2 33.♗c3 ♕b3 34.a5 ♖c8 35.♗d2 ♕b2 36.♖d1 ♗d8 would have been difficult for my opponent to find in time-trouble.

30...♖xc7

Now the initiative again passes to White. 30...♖fb8! was the only move to bring my opponent a draw, but in time-trouble neither he nor I saw it: 31.♖xb7 ♖xb7 32.♘h2 ♔g7! 33.f4 ♕e2! 34.♘f3 ♖b3 35.♔h2! ♖xf3 36.♕xf3 ♕xd2 37.♖c7 ♕xd4 38.♖xd7 ♔f8! 39.g3 g4 40.♕xg4 ♕f2+.

31.♖xc7 ♖d8



32.♘h2! Here I thought that White would win easily by sacrificing on g5, and it was only when I delved more deeply into the po-

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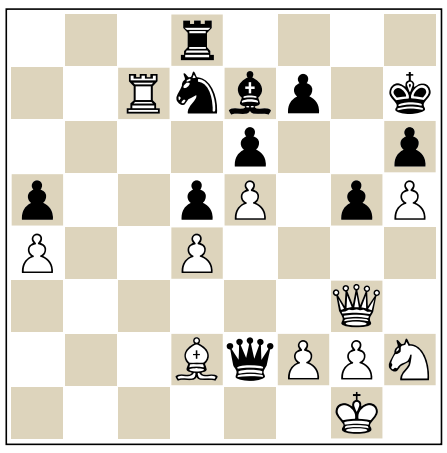
sition that I found a draw for Black. And to be honest, when I found this draw I realized that I had thrown away my advantage: 32.♗xg5 hxg5 33.♘xg5+ ♗xg5 34.♕xg5 ♕e2! 35.♕xd8 ♕d1+ 36.♔h2 ♕xh5+ 37.♔g3 ♕g6+ 38.♔h3 ♕f5+ 39.♔h4 ♕xf2+ 40.♔h3 ♕f5+ 41.♔g3 ♕d3+ 42.♔h2 ♕xd4! 43.♖xd7 ♕f4+, with a draw.

32...♕e2?

The best defence was 32...♔g7! 33.f4 ♕b6! 34.fxg5 ♔h8! 35.gxh6 ♖g8 36.♖c8 ♕xd4+ 37.♗e3 ♕d1+ 38.♘f1 ♘f8 39.♕h3 ♕xa4 40.♕f3 ♕g4 41.♘h2 ♕xf3 42.♘xf3 ♘h7 43.♖c7 ♗g5 44.♘xg5 ♘xg5 45.♔f1, and White is only slightly better.

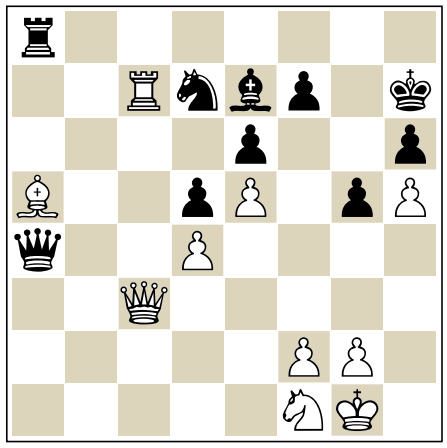


33.♗xa5??

Here I missed the simple move 33.♕f3!, forcing the exchange, after which White would again have won easily: 33...♕xf3 34.♘xf3 ♗b4 35.♗xb4 axb4 36.a5 ♔g7 37.a6 ♘b6 38.♖b7 ♘c4 39.♖xb4 ♖a8 40.♖a4 ♖a7 41.♖a1 ♘b6 42.♘e1 ♘d7 43.♘d3 ♘b8 44.♘c5 ♘c6 45.♖d1.

33...♕d1+ 34.♘f1 ♕xa4 35.♕c3 ♖a8

And for the first time in the game Black finds himself in a drawing position.



36.♖xd7??

I do not have the words to explain this move. Of course, the position is equal after 36.♕d3+ ♔g7 37.♗c3 or 36.♖b7 ♖xa5 37.♖xd7 ♕xd7 38.♕xa5.

I can only say that throughout the game I thought my position was winning, and that with every move the win was coming closer. In my opponent's time-trouble I began playing on his time, and I thought that the position would be easily won, and therefore at certain moments I missed a win, and at the end a very simple one.

I overlooked the simple move 34...♕xa4, after which I realized very clearly that I had thrown away my advantage. This upset me very much and as a result I made a blunder.

In any case I wanted to play 36.♖b7, but, still thinking about how I could have squandered such an advantage, I played 36.♖xd7 instead of 36.♖b7. It was a great pity to suffer such a defeat, but we are professionals, and none of us is guaranteed against this – it can happen to anyone, and so I will try to forget this game and think about future tournaments.

White resigned. Thank you for your attention.

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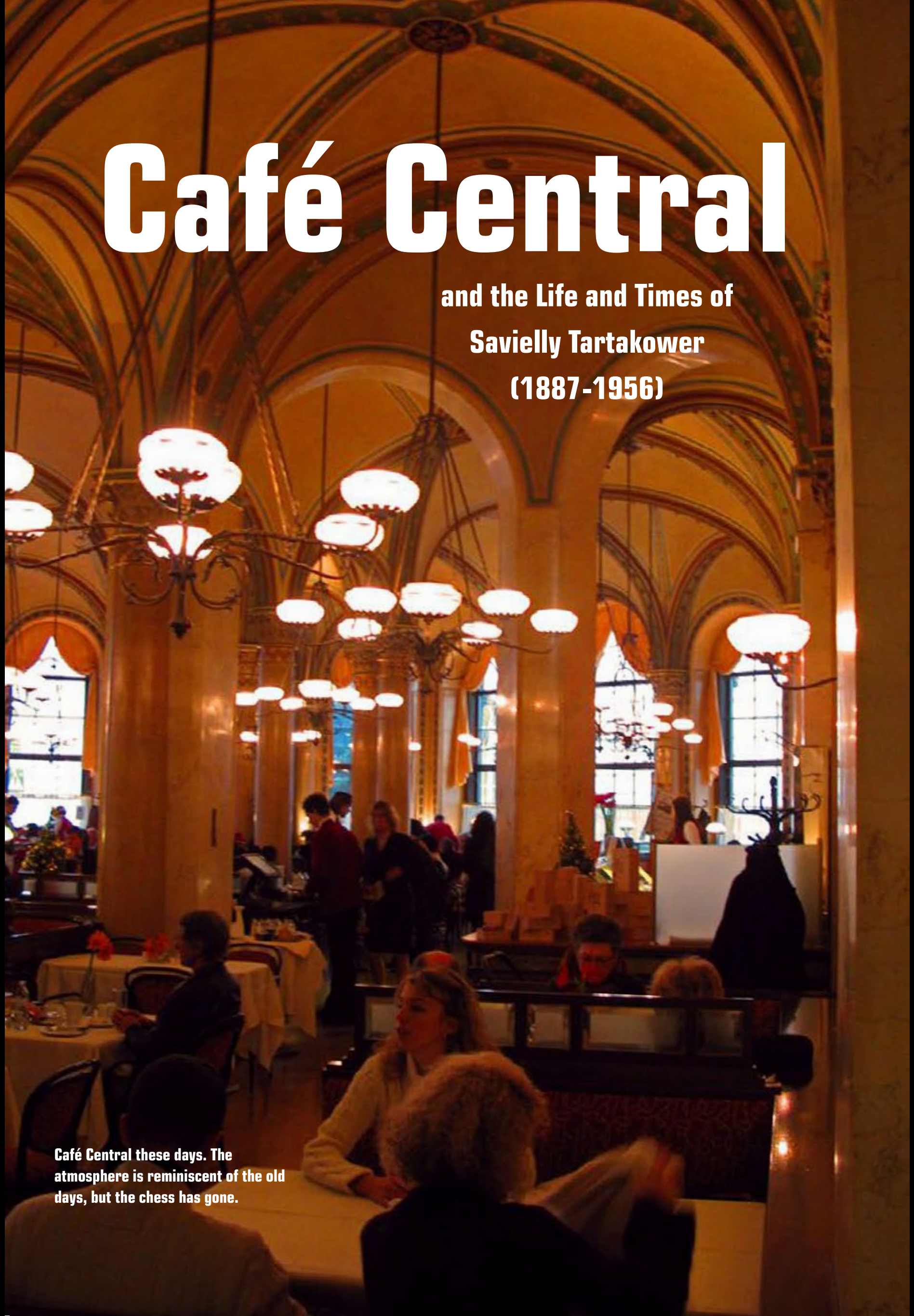


Café Central these days. The atmosphere is reminiscent of the old days, but the chess has gone.

Genna Sosonko

When the Austro-Hungarian Empire's minister of foreign affairs was informed that Russia was turbulent and that a revolution might take place there, he roared loudly with laughter: 'And, if you please, who on earth is going to make that revolution happen? Mr. Bronstein, who does nothing but play chess from morning to night at Café Central?'

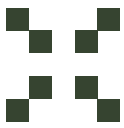
When a revolution did take place in Russia a few years later, and the name of the inveterate visitor to the Viennese café was spoken in reference to one of its main leaders, Joseph, the universally-known head waiter of the Central, wasn't surprised at all: 'I always knew that Herr Bronstein would go far', he remarked. He added, though: 'But I never thought he'd leave without paying for four cups of coffee.'

Although the remarks by the minister of foreign affairs and the waiter at the café were mentioned by reliable sources, both sound apocryphal. Then again, you never know: Lev Davidovich Trotsky spent a total of seven years in the capital of Austria-Hungary, and, as one of the most significant figures among the Social Democrats, he had a high profile. In that period (1907-14), which Trotsky in his autobiography called his 'Viennese chapter', he could often be found at Café Central.

After heated political discussions he often sat at the chessboard here for a long time, until late at night. A few letters from that period in which Trotsky writes about chess have been preserved. One of them – to Petersburg Menshevik Dmitri Sverchkov – he concludes thus: '...I suggest a correspondence chess game with you. I hereby begin: 1.e2-e4, if you do 1...e7-e5, then I'll play 2.♘g1-f3, and if you do 2...♘b8-c6, then I'll go 3.♗c4.'

On August 2, 1914, the chief of the political police, Geiger, summoned Trotsky and told him that due to the start of the war an order might be given the next day to take all Russians and Serbs into custody. When Trotsky inquired as to whether it was being suggested that he leave, Geiger replied that the sooner he did that, the better it would be for him. Trotsky promised that he would leave for Switzerland with his family the next day. ' "Hm... I would prefer you to do this today", Geiger remarked', the future leader of the Russian revolution recalled in his memoirs.

Seven years after Trotsky hurriedly fled the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire without paying for the coffee, he received another invitation. 'Knowing of your interest in the past in the art of chess, I consider it my duty to inform you that the Moscow Championship tournament has been organized on the premises of the Central Military Sport Club of the Lenin Training Centre at 5 Kamergersky Lane. Not being so bold as to tear you away from your government work with a direct invitation to the event, I would be happy to have your presence within the walls of the aforementioned club. I hereby offer a chronicle of the chess activities in the most recent period of time in Europe and America. The recorded games of Lasker and Capablanca that I have will be sent without delay if you so desire.'



Here one could meet Elias Canetti, Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, Max Adler and many, many others.

Duz-Khotimirsky, Nenarokov, Grekov, Grigoriev, Ilyin-Zhenevsky, Zubarev and other famous players took part in the Moscow tournament of 1921, to which the head of the training centre had invited Trotsky, and 'Herr Bronstein' himself, who had sat in Café Central for days and nights, was the second most important person in the Soviet government after Lenin.

* * *

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the Vienna café was a cultural institution in its own way. In the café heated debates took place, literary schools and philosophical trends were formed, and issues were discussed that would later excite the whole world. Here one could meet Elias Canetti, Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, Max Adler and many, many others.

In that particular Viennese atmosphere the types and characters of chess bohemianism were created, including habits that can also be seen in chess players of the 21st century. They went to sleep long after midnight, got up very late, and sat in the café for a long time day in, day out.

Almost everyone was studying at the university, a few had graduated from it, and others were even starting to work, but once they'd breathed in the air of those Vienna coffee houses they could no longer

breathe it out, and their whole life was connected with chess.

The café on the Herrengasse was one of the main chess centres in Europe at that time. Amateurs came, and one could also see famous players here: Perlis, Kolisch, Réti, Schlechter, Grünfeld, Spielmann, Vidmar, Kmoch, Tartakower. But Leo Levi was considered the king of the Central: no one could deal with the 'clients' like he could, since play was almost always for money.

The interior of the café was impressive: mouldings on the high ceiling, painted in Venetian style, huge windows, columns. A grand piano stood between the columns, on which a pianist played Viennese melodies, and newspapers in the most varied languages hung on bamboo sticks. Not only chess was played here, but also cards and billiards.

All the types of coffee on the Central's menu were numbered and placed on a scale of colour shades. When ordering, the visitor simply said nine or twelve, and the waiters knew the tastes of the regulars by heart. A glass of pure water came with the coffee, the head waiter constantly refilled it, and the visitors (chess players most of all!) could stay in the café for hours.

Looking around timidly, I walked through the imposing doors of Café Central on August 19, 1972. This was the second day of my sojourn outside the borders of the Soviet Union and, wandering around Vienna, I went into the café completely accidentally, knowing nothing about its glorious history.

But even if I'd known, I don't think that I could have got myself in the mood to think about those who sat at the tables here at the beginning of the century. The first half of my life had ended, and the other, this one, was only starting, and I couldn't know what awaited me in it.

Decisively turning down an apple strudel, I restricted myself to a little cup of coffee. There was a long list of coffees on the menu, and I entered into difficult negotiations with the waiter, who didn't completely understand what exactly the foreigner meant, explaining mainly with gestures. I remember that I was staggered by the price of a little cup of espresso, and to avoid a financial fiasco I had to limit the telegram that I sent to my relatives in Leningrad telling them that I had arrived safely in the free world to only two words. But those words turned out to be enough, and although almost 40 years have passed since that time, I'm ready to sign my name under them even today: All good.

Coming out of the post office, I wandered along the pavement like a somnambulist, marvelling at people with an expression on their faces the like of which I'd never seen before. They patiently waited for traffic lights to turn green, even if there was no sign of a car anywhere within eyeshot. All the cars were foreign; a crowd of men immediately gathered around foreign-made cars on Nevsky Prospect in Leningrad, discussing every detail, comparing them with domestic models.

A word spoken loudly by a solidly-built gentleman with a walking-stick and a striking checked jacket, whose stomach I almost bumped into, brought me back to reality. That word came in very handy for me in my subsequent life, and I sometimes repeated it during a tournament game, for myself, of course, but I can still see the face of the Viennese gentleman today...

Every time I'm in Vienna I go into the Central, a very bright, modern café right in the centre of the city. It's always crowded, people see their friends here, have business meetings, drink coffee, or just have a bite to eat, and since recently one can see laptops on the tables here, the screens of which young people stare at steadily while working on them with a finger of one hand and raising a cup of coffee to their mouth with the other.

And although the interior of the café is almost unchanged, nothing here reminds me either of the wonderful people who visited the Central at the start of the last century, or of the tumultuous chess life that once seethed in the café.

By the way, the Viennese gentleman said back then: 'Achtung!'

The trainer of pieces

Savielly Tartakower was 17 when he first came to Vienna. After college he had to continue his education, and if there was no argument about the location of his studies – Vienna, of course, Vienna! – the question of what he should dedicate his life to wasn't so obvious. His father wanted both his sons – Savielly and his younger brother – to study medicine. Artur didn't object, but Savielly preferred literature or philosophy. In the end the sides came to a compromise, and the brothers started studying law.

Even before visiting the university Savielly went to Café Central. For many years the café became a second home for him. Tartakower not only played chess and cards here, but also analysed, commented on games for *Wiener Schachzeitung* and other magazines, wrote chess (and music!) columns in the newspapers, or just met friends.

In 1909 Tartakower became a doctor of law, and although he was never in his life a practicing lawyer, he was very proud of his title – he always wrote 'Dr.' in front of his surname when he signed something.

The same year he took part in the big Petersburg

tournament, and then returned to Vienna – it was time to look for work. Artur had already got a job as a legal consultant at some firm, but Savielly had no inclination for that kind of thing: how could he trade chess, which brought him some income, albeit of an irregular kind, for boring work in an office? Even if

In 1909 Tartakower became a doctor of law, and although he was never in his life a practicing lawyer, he was very proud of his title – he always wrote 'Dr.' in front of his surname when he signed something.

his father, who came to Vienna to inspect his sons' living conditions, insisted on it.

Tartakower preferred another kind of work: appearances in tournaments, simultaneous exhibitions, lessons for wealthy pupils, playing for money in the café, columns in newspapers and magazines, reporting from big events, writing books. He would do this for his entire life.

* * *

At the very beginning of the war Tartakower's brother was killed on the eastern front. Savielly's sister Sylvia, whom he hadn't seen for many years, was still in Russia. They met in Moscow in 1925, where Sylvia came especially for the international tournament in which her famous brother was participating.

'Like the wild animal in the saga of Arion, the Bolshevik rulers proclaimed the arrival of a chess miracle', began the short introduction by Tartakower to the book in German by Alekhine about the misadventures of the future world champion in Soviet Russia. I don't think anyone in Moscow paid attention to these words: compared with the characterizations of the new regime by Alekhine himself, Tartakower's irony was very mild.

During the opening ceremony Tartakower was asked to say a few words. 'Citoyens et citoyennes!' he began, and silence fell in the hall, but as soon as Tartakower switched to Russian – 'Grazhdane i grazhdanki!' – applause broke out, interrupting his speech more than once. On his return to Europe, Tartakower wrote to his sister for about another year, but he didn't receive a reply to a single one of his letters. He never saw her again.

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Tartakower unexpectedly became a Polish citizen; he only knew a few words of Polish, and with his new compatriots he spoke one of the languages in which he was fluent: Russian, German or French. He played for Poland in six Olympiads, took part in the national championship from time to time, winning it twice, and gave a few lessons to Miguel Najdorf, when he was still Mieczek and living in Warsaw. Whenever Tartakower came up in conversation many years later, the Argentinian grandmaster always called him 'my teacher'.

Led by Rubinstein and Tartakower, the Polish team won the Olympiad in Hamburg in 1930. At the next Olympiad the Poles were defeated by the Americans, among whom there were several Polish immigrants. Tartakower tossed out a retort at the time: 'We have affiliates everywhere...', anticipating a line from a song by Vladimir Vysotsky: 'Over there – a quarter of them are our former people'. That line became popular half a century later, when representatives of the Soviet school of chess could be encountered in almost any team in the world.

* * *

A young Alexander Koblentz, arriving in Amsterdam in 1935 for the Alekhine-Euwe match, saw Tartakower like this: 'Short in stature, with little hands and legs; under his open jacket his waistcoat tightly fits his bulging abdomen. Through gold-rimmed glasses his intelligent eyes look on affectionately with a slightly ironic squint.'

At that match the doctor was a correspondent for

numerous newspapers, as usual. There were always dozens of pieces of paper in front of him, on which throughout the game he entered not only variations, but also commentary composed off-the-cuff.

Literature was his passion. He never missed the latest books and himself wrote a screenplay for a cinematographer. The first collection of Tartakower's poetry came out in Rostov in 1911. In 1923 another book by Tartakower came out in Berlin, *The Russian Face of Revolution*.

Tartakower translated the works of young Russian poets into German, prefacing them with a long essay. Besides the translations in the book there was also a poem by Tartakower himself, written in Russian and also translated into German. Tartakower also translated from German to Russian, and his translations of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Rainer Maria Rilke are well known. Once he gave Hans Kmoch an anthology of German poetry, all marked with his own comments and translations into French.

The shadow of Tartakower looms in Nabokov's *The Luzhin Defence*, when the appearance of the protagonist is accompanied by the muttering of his opponent Turati: 'Tar, tar, tre tretar.' Then again, it's also possible that this was simply a transliteration from the French, 'Tard, tard, très très tard' (late, late, very very late).

The very first interview with Nabokov appeared in the Riga Russian-language newspaper *Segodnya* in 1932, specifically in connection with *The Luzhin Defence*. He says in it: 'In order to write Luzhin I had to do a great deal of work on my chess. By the way, Alekhine claimed that I intended to depict Tartakower. But I don't know him at all. My Luzhin is the purest fruit of my imagination.'

That probably was the case, although Nabokov knew Tartakower very well as an observer and even wrote a review of the grandmaster's poetry collection, *An Anthology of Lunar Poets*. The review appeared on May 30, 1928 in the newspaper *Rul* that was published in Russian in Berlin.

Although the name S. Revokatrat was on the cover of the collection, Nabokov, who himself loved to play on words, saw through this not-so-tricky reversal. Especially as the eccentric booklet included poems that were also signed with the back-to-front surnames of famous poets: Nikhsup, Votnomrel, Ninub, Ninese and so on. The fact that the book was written by a respected grandmaster couldn't protect its author from harsh criticism.

Chess players are familiar with the so-called pearls of eastern wisdom that were dreamt up by Tartakower. One of the most well known of them goes: 'There are players who are weak and don't know that they are weak: these are ignoramuses – avoid them! There are players who are weak and know that they are weak: these are smart – help them! There are players who are strong and don't know that they are strong: these are modest – respect them! There are players who are strong and know that they are strong: these are chess sages – follow them!'

Nabokov's review concludes with a quote from Tartakower's book: 'Endure, but don't think that it's endurance, burn, but don't think that it's passion, believe, but don't think that it's truth, know, but don't think that it's an idea', and with a ruthless addition by the reviewer, noting a 'strange absence': 'Write, but don't think that it's poetry.'

* * *

BAFFLE YOUR OPPONENT!

- **Amazing early deviations in the:**
  Alekhine, Trompowsky, French, Anti-Grünfeld, English, Grünfeld, Lion, Centre Game, Scandinavian, King's Indian, Pirc, Bird, Slav Gambit, Staunton Gambit, Sicilian, and Moscow Variation
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...without having studied large quantities of stuffy theory!

One of Tartakower's numerous acquaintances in Paris in the thirties was Marcel Duchamp, who took part in serious tournaments and Olympiads and dedicated a great deal of his time to chess in that period. Even then Duchamp understood everything: 'Chess is a sport. A harsh sport', he said.

Savielly Grigorievich Tartakower never could accept that axiom. In 50 years he played in 200 competitions with the most varied results. Among them were many mediocre ones, there were upsets, at times even failures, and sometimes he won tournaments, a few times big ones, too, but Tartakower never did acquire a pragmatic, realistic view of the battle. If he had to choose between a solid continuation and a tempting one, even if it was doubtful, he always chose the latter.

To the end of his life he never rid himself of his impracticality, his head-in-the-clouds attitude. He played Paul Keres in Paris in 1954. By the 25th move the players started repeating the position. The Estonian grandmaster, smiling, looked at his opponent: it was dangerous for Tartakower to deviate from the repetition of moves, and besides, the France-Soviet Union match was a friendly, the Soviet grandmasters were beating the French by a large margin, so the result of the game didn't play any role.

The doctor thought for a long time, deviated from the repetition and was soon forced to capitulate. When he was asked after the game why he had refused the draw, Tartakower just shook his head: 'Idiot, the old idiot.'

* * *

A trainer of pieces – this was how he described himself. He also said that the pieces feel, think and complain. Developing this idea, we can say that the pieces live, following their innate instincts, and don't much like paradoxes, although sometimes they do give in to trainers who teach them unusual tricks.

In the history of chess he wasn't the only person who preferred exceptions. Success could smile on him in a single game, an individual tournament, or even – for a short time – take him up to the highest peaks. But being in the pieces' good graces constantly is given only to those who direct them to the most natural path to which they are automatically inclined.

Tartakower's books were translated into many languages. Reading them today, we should confess, however, that much of his legacy is faded and withered. His discussions about methods of conducting the game, and, especially, his analyses of openings, are today mainly of interest to chess historians. But always – to lovers of the game.

* * *

He actively worked for more than 30 chess magazines all over the world, wrote a vast number of books, and his newspaper correspondence appeared in 11 languages. It would seem that he could live in clover, but his whole life he was consumed with a passion that swallowed up all his prizes and fees, even the small streams that flowed from all over. No matter what country Tartakower was in, almost every evening he could be found at a card game in a café or a club, but most often in a casino playing roulette, where success depends on which pocket your joyfully jumping ball stops its run in.

According to Flohr, Tartakower wasn't particularly disappointed when he lost. 'He is used to that, and he joked, "This is only money, and it exists so that it can be spent." Not very wisely said, if you bear in mind how difficult it was for him to obtain that money,' the practical Flohr recalled.

I don't think that Tartakower's words about money were a joke, more likely these were his life's guidelines, and the fact that money was so difficult for him to obtain... well, that only made the risk more attractive and the sensation stronger.

'I lost the rest of my money and lost what I could not pay...' 'I did not mind losing everything I had, I lost more on my word...' This isn't self-reproach from Dostoevsky's passionate gambler, but notes in the diary of the young Tolstoy. Quite a few such confessions can be found in Tolstoy. Another time he writes about the pleasure of 'destroying money', reflecting on people who 'do not have a passion for winning, but acquire a new passion for the game itself – for the sensations.'

'After the pleasure of winning there's no greater pleasure than losing', said a man who devoted decades to gambling, and psychologists confirm that in this type of person there's a demand for the unpredictable, a thirst for the unbelievable, the accidental, the new. Savielly Grigorievich Tartakower was probably also one of these people.

Nimzowitsch wrote that Tartakower's favourite expression at the chessboard was *zertrümmern* – destroy. Most likely a psychoanalyst, laying a bridge from the chessboard to the roulette table and impassively investigating the elements of Tartakower's behaviour, would have drawn the obvious conclusion, but the doctor himself would probably just have smiled.

Tartakower worked best of all after his trips to the casino, when, 'having let off steam', he'd liberated himself from his overflowing emotions. This phenomenon isn't all that uncommon. A shortage of money and always being in a hurry to submit a manuscript on time only sharpened Dostoevsky's senses and ideas, creating the necessary mood and enabling lengthy concentration. The same could also be said

about the English artist Francis Bacon, who thought that gambling, and especially losing, were a wonderful stimulus for creativity: they force you, depending on chance, to look fate in the eye.

Fighting his debts, Tartakower worked even more: it was unthinkable for him not to pay a cards debt on time, no matter what the amount. Tartakower was capable of working 48 hours straight, almost without a break. He could concentrate in any situation, completely divorcing himself from reality. In the ferocious winter of 1920 there was almost no fuel in Vienna, but when Hans Kmoch, dropping in on Tartakower, asked him how he could write in such cold, the latter, without batting an eyelid, replied that he was keeping the outside window open...

Another time, during the tournament in Baden-Baden in 1925, after going to a casino Tartakower worked all night, hurrying to finish a promised article on time. At eight in the morning someone knocked on his door to tell him that breakfast was served. The round started in exactly one hour, and he had to play Rubinstein. Tartakower won.

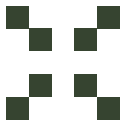
And at the Moscow tournament in the same year Tartakower not only played himself (sharing 5th-6th place), but also, as *Shakhmatny Listok* reported, wrote 50 articles and commented on about 100 games. This ease, this flowing wit, and at times also arrogance, real or put on, couldn't fail to provoke hostility among down-to-earth people, and also among those who were simply envious.

Shakhmatny Listok mentioned an article by the poet Ivan Rukavishnikov, in which he disapprovingly wrote: 'a French Jew who formerly played from Germany, the clown Tartakower.' Some people called him 'Doctor Boastakover'. I don't think, though, that Savielly Grigorievich Tartakower was easy in his daily interactions, especially with those who had an antipathy towards him. Svetozar Gligoric once admitted that he'd copied the exclamation 'Bravo!' from Tartakower. In fact, Tartakower's favourite phrase went like this: 'Bravo! My congratulations!' – pronouncing it with obvious sarcasm during analysis or just in conversation, and we can only guess what kinds of feelings this phrase provoked in the person he was talking to.

* * *

In the autumn of 1975 I played a match with Euwe at the AVRO studio in Hilversum. In the second game we played the Slav Defence – an opening that was often encountered in his matches with Alekhine. After the game ended, taking advantage of the opportunity, I started questioning the ex-world champion about Alekhine, and about the London meeting after the 1946 tournament. Euwe also remembered Tartakower's appearance, commenting that he never went for the majority cause, all his life preferring to maintain his own point of view. He added: 'He was a strange man. With diverse talents, but strange. Strange. Of the modern players, most likely Bronstein reminds me of him...' And he switched the conversation to the game we'd just played.

It was clear that Euwe didn't really want to remember that time. Not least also because the person he was talking to was dealing mainly with facts he had gleaned from Soviet sources, and only now can I see the true dignity of the look he directed at me back then.



I haven't managed to find a single photograph of Tartakower in which he wasn't wearing a tie, and he was always in a suit.

I remembered my conversation with Euwe when I saw in a textbook for beginners by David Bronstein different-coloured diagrams with arrows signifying the direction of attacks, signs and dotted lines, which even an experienced player would have trouble understanding. Those kinds of diagrams in a book by Tartakower immediately came to mind, and I thought to myself that when the Dutch world champion had compared the two, in some respects he was right.

His world view and principles were formulated in Vienna at the beginning of the last century. The expressions 'my esteem', 'I have the honour of bowing', 'your obedient servant', 'do not refuse the compliment', and similar old-fashioned turns of phrase were also preserved in his lexicon from those Vienna times, and Tartakower used them in whichever language he had to converse.

I haven't managed to find a single photograph of Tartakower in which he wasn't wearing a tie, and he was always in a suit, often a three-piece suit. Those who knew him personally say that his manners were those of someone who appeared to be a maestro.

Alexander Kotov recalled that in The Hague in 1948 he was sitting with Lilienthal and Tartakower

at a table in a restaurant, and Lilienthal carelessly remarked, touching the links of the gold watch chain that was hanging from Tartakower's trouser pocket: 'What a beautiful thing.' Savielly Grigorievich immediately unhooked the chain: 'You like it, take it...' None of Lilienthal's attempts to refuse the gift helped, he had to accept the present and only later think of a way to show his gratitude to the doctor.

Salo Flohr once remarked that it wouldn't be difficult to write a book about Tartakower. I can't agree with him. And no one has written his biography, if we exclude the recently published fictional biography *Moral Victories* by David Lovejoy. I suggest that this task isn't one of the easiest, not to mention, of course, the tragic death of his parents, who were killed in Rostov in 1911, the death of his brother, describing his military adventures during both world wars, listing his tournament results and quoting his aphorisms.

Sarcastic and proud, he hid behind jokes and irony and sometimes seemed prickly and even cynical, in fact being a very vulnerable person. Nothing is known about his personal life, and it's difficult to say what role women played in it. He had occasional flings, of course, and Tartakower himself didn't make a secret of this. When he was advised to marry, he replied that he was too ugly and too poor.

During the Moscow tournament of 1925 he was 38 and he decided, finally, to get married. Tartakower proposed to Taisia Vyazovskaya (her younger sister was married to Ilyin-Zhenevsky), but he didn't receive her consent. Vera Schneider, whose name is mentioned in passing in Lovejoy's novel, is an invention, as the author himself admits.

I once read a quote by a famous manager who had chosen the words of 'a certain chess grandmaster' as a motto for his professional activity. These were the words of Tartakower: 'Tactics is knowing what to do when there is something to do. Strategy is knowing what to do when there is nothing to do.' But it wasn't that aphorism by Tartakower that came out of the sphere of the chessboard and won popularity throughout the world, it was another one: 'Moral victories don't count.'

In what circumstances did the doctor say that? After an absurd blunder in a game, where he'd completely outplayed his opponent? A tournament that didn't work out, in which he'd demonstrated brilliant play? Although after an unsuccessful performance, in reply to a question about his own result, Tartakower was always surprised: 'What tournament? What are you talking about? This is the first I've heard of that tournament...'

'Moral victories don't count.' Perhaps I'm mistaken, but in the words of the maestro I hear a sigh of regret, disappointment, even bitterness. Today, when tough pragmatism has become one of the main components of life, there's a literal sense imbued in these words.

Athletics coaches inspire their wards with them. Someone found this slogan on the doors of an office in the Pentagon. Many politicians have taken these words as a guiding principle for themselves. In business and in everyday life many, many people follow this formula: only real victories count, and only they remain in the memory.

'Moral victories don't count.' Don't count at all? Or is there something in them, nevertheless? Was his life a moral victory? What's he on about? – the unsentimental reader will say: a lonely existence, spent in a shabby little hotel? That's a typical failure. A failure? Or, perhaps, a hero?

I don't know. I don't know. I only know that it was his lot to live in a stretch of history that wasn't the most resplendent, and he lived his life honourably. And besides the role of hero or failure in the very short, one and only life that is given to us, there's something a little more frightening: just living, living day after day, knowing in advance how any life will end.

In his mature years dark circles appeared under his eyes, which weren't noticeable in his younger years. Was he suffering from some kind of disease? Were they a mark of the difficult life of a chess professional? Did they appear after sleepless nights, when months of stressful work were thrown away on the green baize?

These are all just guesses. All his life he remained a lone wolf and let nobody into his internal world. He kept everyone at a distance. Many people could boast that they knew him, but no one could say they were his friend.

Hans Kmoch recalls that at the end he got very fat, the considerable dimensions of his stomach bulged out of his wide-cut trousers, which were held up by old-fashioned suspenders; little remained of his vitality and wit, as if life had flowed out of him; and from time to time he started talking about suicide.

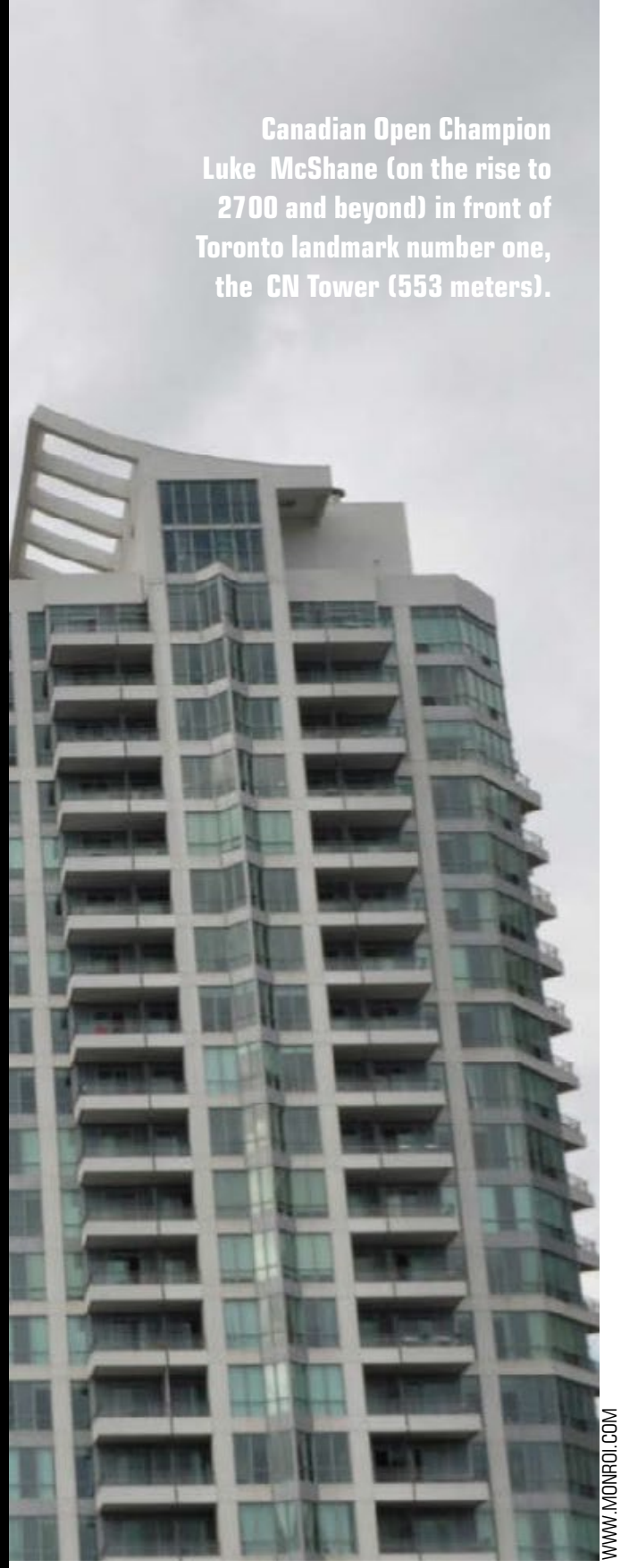
The last poem by Tartakower in the collection that came out in Rostov in 1911 is called 'The Orphan'. Here are the concluding lines of it:

In another's house, wherever it may be
I'll end my hateful life,
And the grave will become a home for me,
As my home became a grave.

Savielly Grigorievich Tartakower died in Paris in 1956, a few days before his 69th birthday.

Cool Hand Luke

If there's such a thing as a North American Open Tournament with ideal conditions, then the 47th edition of the Canadian Open in Toronto came pretty close. Just imagine yourself in a comfortable room 30 floors up over Lake Ontario, overlooking the Toronto Islands on the left and Rogers Center in the heart of downtown Toronto on the right. Up there in the sky, there's the CN Tower, which only two years ago yielded the title of the tallest construction on the planet to Dubai's Burj Khalifa.



Canadian Open Champion Luke McShane (on the rise to 2700 and beyond) in front of Toronto landmark number one, the CN Tower (553 meters).

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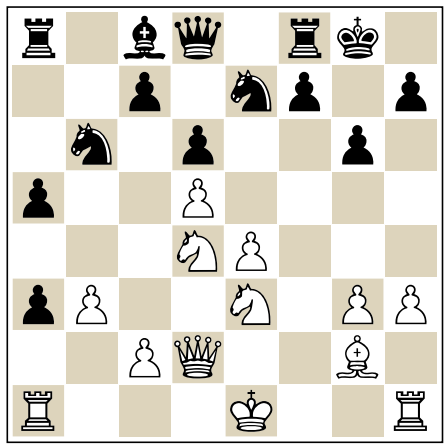
Alex Shabalov

And when you're stepping out of the tournament hotel, you're on the officially longest street in the world, Yonge (1896 kilometers), which starts at the Toronto Bay and stretches all the way up to the Ontario-Minnesota border. Your choice of things to do are in the range of taking a boat ride, the Russian Music and Food festival, the Caribana celebrations, the Manchester United-Celtic match at Rogers Center, celebrating Spain's victory at the World Cup with a European-looking crowd that speaks 200 languages, or hanging out all night at the Queen's Street bars... There's only one problem. Only one thing that stops you and sobers you up in the midst of this non-stop summer fest. Every night *you have to play chess!*

This was Brian Fiedler's sophomore attempt to bring world-class chess into Ontario (previously he had flexed his muscles with the Toronto Open in March 2009). A firm believer in corporate sponsorship (in stark contrast to the U.S. model, where all the money involved comes from the players' entry fees), he got numerous sponsors of renown on board, such as RBC Dominion Securities and Deloitte. Almost all the rounds started at 6 pm to accommodate the mostly working Ontario crowd, but this schedule also left hope for those night warriors with plenty of time on their hands to get themselves into shape before the round. The mornings and afternoons all featured various exhibitions (chess clinics, simuls, lectures) by participating GMs. I gave my first ever Chess960 simul (thanks to Mark Sutton, the inventor of 960 dice, and now I wonder why people would even bother with traditional simultaneous exhibitions anymore! 960 is so much more fun!). The weather was in full cooperation and the timing of the tournament, squeezed in between the World and the U.S. Opens, couldn't have been better. Most of the seven top GMs made it straight from Philadelphia, but some extreme chess tourists, e.g. Ed Rozentalis, flew all the way north after scoring a tournament victory in Paraguay! The entire Canadian Olympic Team was present (with the exception of Pascal Charbonneau, who vanished into the NY corporate world, and Mark Bluvshtein, 2009 Canadian Open Champion, who was busy with school), along with a bunch of other young ambitious players, which promised an interesting race.

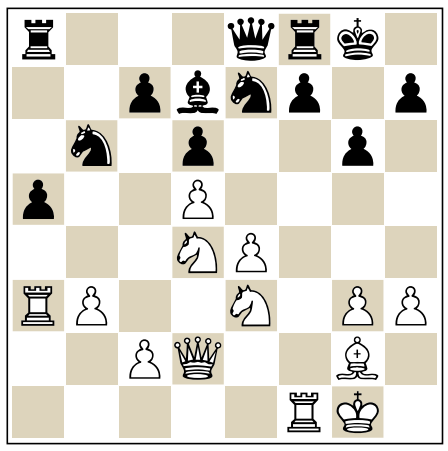
The very first round already featured some funny pairings, with the 1976 Canadian Open winner, Lawrence Day, facing the number one seed.



Day-Harikrishna
position after 18.♘e3

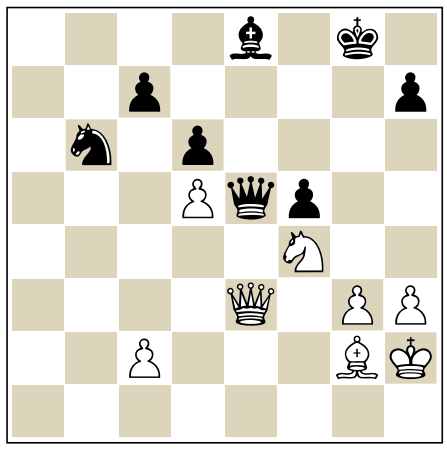
In this dynamic Pirc position Black has everything ready for the thematic 18...f5, with slightly better chances after 19.exf5 ♘xf5 20. ♘exf5 ♗xf5 21.0-0 ♗d7. Instead he chooses:

18...♕e8?! 19.0-0 ♗d7 20.♖xa3

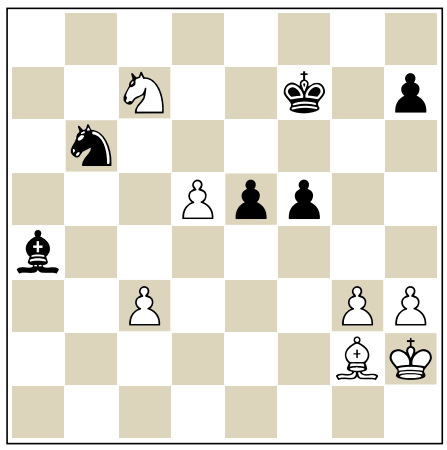


20...f5? Now this is simply bad. **21.exf5 ♘xf5 22.♘exf5 gxf5 23.♖e1** Even more energetic was 23.♘e6 ♗xe6 24.dxe6 ♖a7 25.♖e1, and Black's position is untenable. **23...♕g6 24.♔h2 a4 25.♘e6 ♖fc8 26.♘f4** Again, White is still better after this, but 26.♕f2 or 26.♕d4, with the idea of ♘xc7, was more precise.

26...♕f7 27.♕d4 axb3 28.♖xb3 ♖a4 29.♖b4 ♖xb4 30.♕xb4 ♖e8 31.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 32.♕c3 ♕g7 33.♕e3 ♕e5

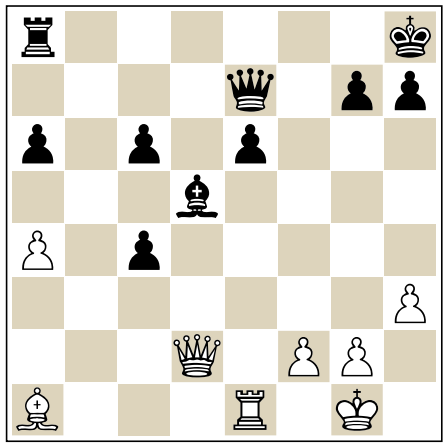


34.♕xe5?
Winning a pawn turns out to be the wrong decision.
34...dxe5 35.♘e6 ♗a4 36.c3 ♔f7 37.♘xc7



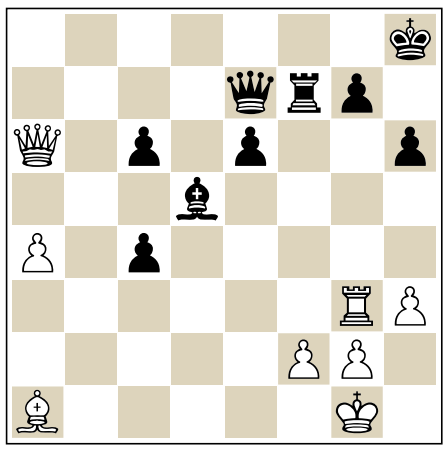
37...♔e7!
Black seizes the initiative and finishes the game nicely.
38.g4 f4 39.♗e4 ♔d6 40.♘a6 ♘xd5 41.c4 ♘c3 42.c5+ ♔e7 43.♗xh7 e4 44.♘b4 e3 45.♔g2 ♗d1 46.♘c6+ ♔e6 47.♗g8+ ♔f6 48.♘d4 ♔e5 49.♘f3+ ♗xf3+ 50.♔xf3 ♔d4 51.♗h7 e2 52.♔f2 f3
White resigned.

Despite this warning, Pentala was able to overcome tough pairings with very technical play. As per usual in this type of chess environment, the difference between a good tournament and a complete disaster is one game.

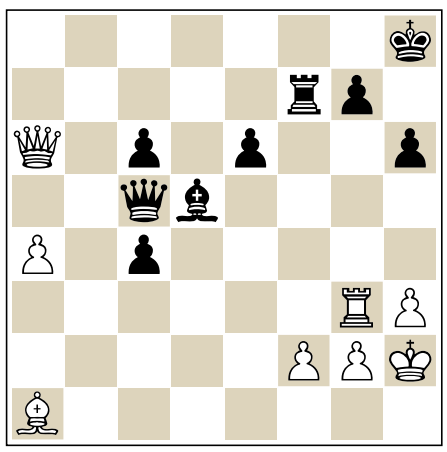


Yoos-Harikrishna
position after 31...♗d5

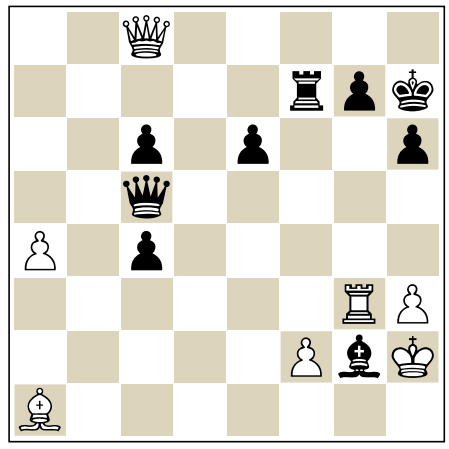
Despite two extra pawns for Black the position remains balanced due to White's dominance on the dark squares. Black pushes hard for a win.
32.♖e3 ♖f8 33.♖g3 ♖f7 34.♕a5 h6 35.♕xa6



35...♕c5!
This attack on f2, which cannot be ignored, looks very strong. However, White still has a defense.
36.♔h2!?
Hard to tell if this is a cunning trap or whether White had simply missed that 36.♗xg7+ ♖xg7 (36...♔h7 even loses to 37.♗f6!!) 37.♕c8+ ♔h7 38.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 39.♕c7+ draws on the spot.



36...♗xg2??
A brilliant idea with a tactical flaw. 36...♕xf2 37.♕c8+ ♔h7 38.♕b8 would leave the position unchanged. The bishop cannot be taken, but...
37.♕c8+ ♔h7



38.♕xe6! ...wins for White, because there's no 38...♗d5, in view of 39.♕xf7!. **38...♕xf2 39.♕g6+ ♔g8 40.♖xg2 ♕f4+ 41.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 42.♖xg3** The rest is just frustration on Black's part.
42...♖a7 43.♖a3 c5 44.a5 ♔f7 45.♔g3 ♔e6 46.♔f4 g6 47.♔e4 ♔d6 48.♗e5+ ♔c6 49.a6 ♔b5 50.♔d5 g5 51.♗b8 ♖a8 52.a7 ♔b4 53.♖a6 c3 54.♖b6+ ♔a3 55.♔c4 c2 56.♖a6+ ♔b2 57.♗e5+ ♔c1 58.♖a1+ ♔d2 59.♗c3+ ♔e2 60.♗b2 ♔f3 61.♔xc5 ♔g2 62.♔b6 ♔xh3 63.♖h1+ ♔g2 64.♖xh6 g4 65.♖c6
Black resigned.

My personal story at this tournament came down to one game. After being paired up(!) to meet Ontario K-5 Champion, 10-year-old Razvan Preotu in Round 5, I found myself playing on Board 1.

KI 55.10 – E76
Alex Shabalov
Luke McShane
Toronto 2010 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4
There was a little pre-history to this aggressive choice. I was playing Luke for the second time in

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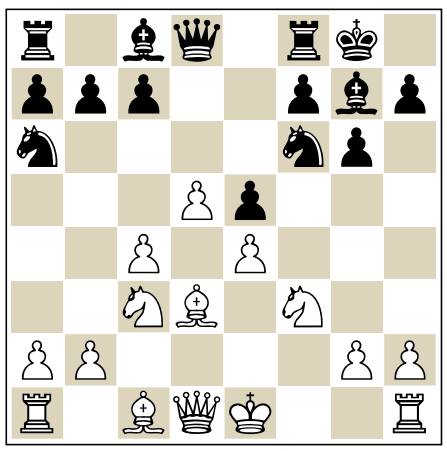
Wherever he went in Toronto, our reporter Alex Shabalov made sure he would find his way back to the venue of the Canadian Open.

10 days (the previous meeting happened to be the last round of the World Open in Philadelphia. Luke proceeded to win that money game and, needless to say, I was in revenge mode). So, no Berlin this time.

5...0-0 6.♘f3 ♘a6 7.♗d3 e5 8. fxe5 dxe5 9.d5

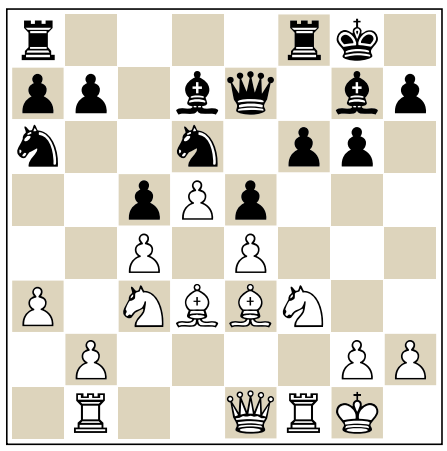


9...♘e8 This move, which is far from being the main line, came totally expected, as McShane had already played it against Richard Palliser in the British League in 2009. White continued with 10.0-0 c5 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.♗e3, then blundered seven moves later and promptly resigned on move 20.

10.0-0 c5 11.a3 ♗d7 12.♕e1

I had spent quite some time preparing for this position, but, as so often, the feeling of some slight confusion as to what was really going on came after the game.

12...♕e7 13.♗g5 f6 14.♗e3 ♘d6 15.♖b1



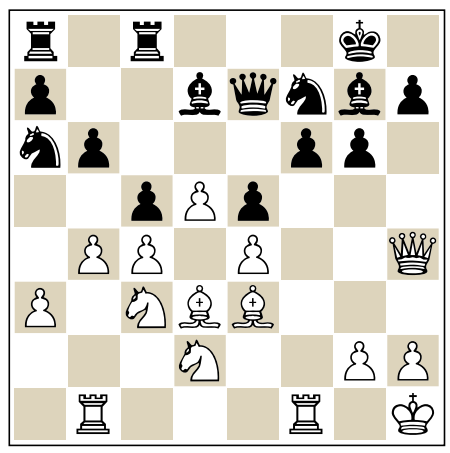
It is quite fun to look at this with the computer. No matter which engine you use, White is always showing a serious advantage (close to +1). Which is quite understandable, because he has a space advantage, and every black attempt to break through with ...f5 opens the position in White's favor. However, if you look for advice, how should White continue to improve his position if Black simply waits? That would be a problem. You will see many ♔h1-g1, ♕d2-e2-c2 and ♖b1-c1-d1 maneuvers. And the assessment remains the same.

I'd say my conclusion now is the following: White should maneuver in such a way that ...f6-f5 is never good for Black and wait for a good moment to play b2-b4-b5, followed by a3-a4-a5, before Black is able to play ...a7-a5. Then Black may simply suffocate from lack of space.

15...♖fc8?!

Taking the rook away from the kingside cannot be recommended.

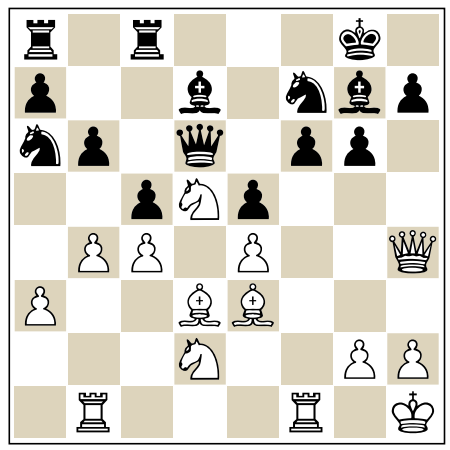
16.♕h4 b6 17.♔h1 ♘f7 18.♘d2 ♘c7 19.b4 ♘a6



20.d6?!

White gets carried away. I couldn't resist the temptation to put my knight on d5, when in fact it was the perfect moment to execute the above-mentioned plan: 20.b5! ♘c7 21.a4, etc., and White's space advantage becomes too serious.

20...♕xd6 21.♘d5

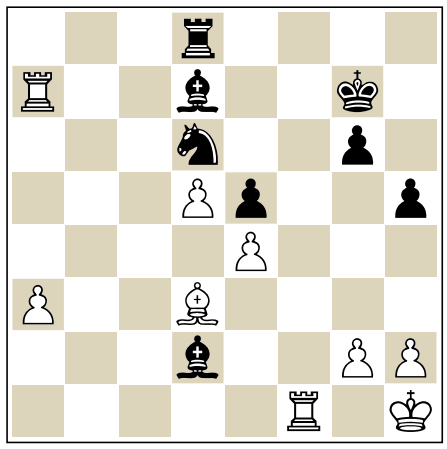


21...♖f8!

Cold-blooded defending.

22.♖f3 ♘c7 23.bxc5 bxc5 24.

♖bf1 ♘xd5 25.cxd5 ♖ac8 26.♕f2 ♕e7 27.♖c1 ♗h6 28.♗xc5?!
Not that bad a move, but psychologically speaking it shows that White failed to regroup. He would have continued to enjoy a slight advantage after 28.♗xh6 ♘xh6 29.♗a6 ♖b8 30.♘b3.
28...♖xc5 29.♕xc5 ♕xc5 30.♖xc5 ♗xd2 31.♖c7 ♖d8 32.♖xf6 ♔g7 33.♖f1 ♘d6 34.♖xa7 h5 35.♖a6 ♘b7 36.♖a7 ♘d6



37.a4? With this move White completely loses objectivity. Even though the position is still far from lost, there was absolutely no reason not to repeat moves here.
37...♗e3 38.♖a6 ♘b7 39.♗b5 ♘c5 40.♖a7 ♔h6 41.♗xd7 ♘xd7 42.♖c7 h4 43.♖c3 ♗d4 44.♖h3 ♔g7 45.♖b1 g5 46.g3 ♘c5 47.gxh4 ♘xe4 48.♖f3 gxh4 49.♔g2 ♔h6 50.♖d3 ♖g8+ 51.♔f3 ♖f8+
White resigned.

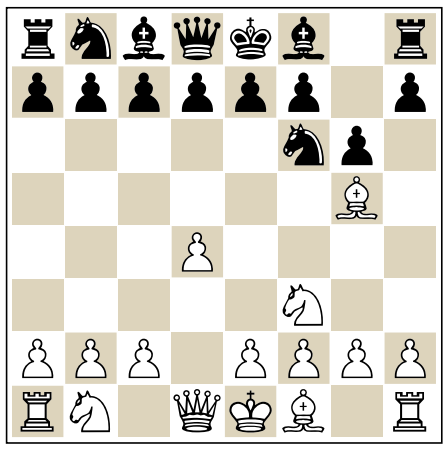
Despite the fact that he destroyed my summer, I would like to congratulate Luke on his return to chess! I think it is better for your karma to be even a bad chess player than to be *any* kind of currency trader (after graduating from Oxford, Luke worked for Goldman Sachs for a few years), and Luke is not a bad chess player. Clearly not an opening person, he has the natural ability to outplay his opponents from equal positions. It should serve him well during his climb to way past 2700.

His best effort was his win over Vladimir Malaniuk.

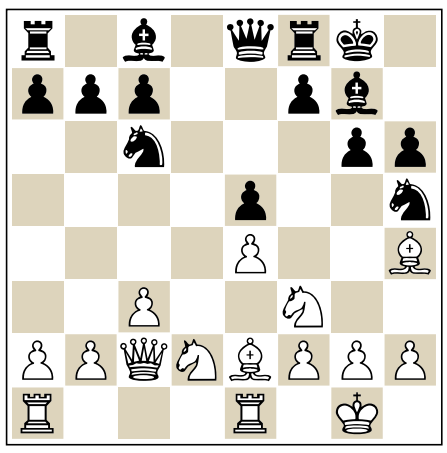
NOTES BY
Luke McShane

QP 1.10 – A48
Vladimir Malaniuk
Luke McShane
Toronto 2010 (8)

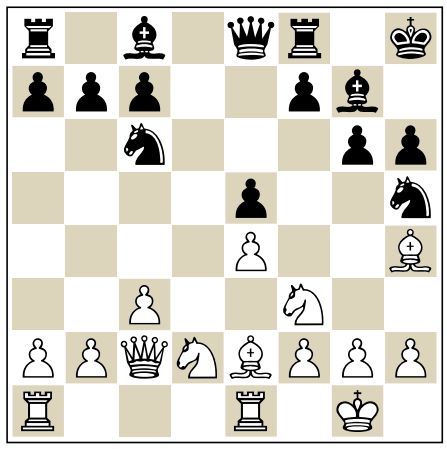
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♗g5



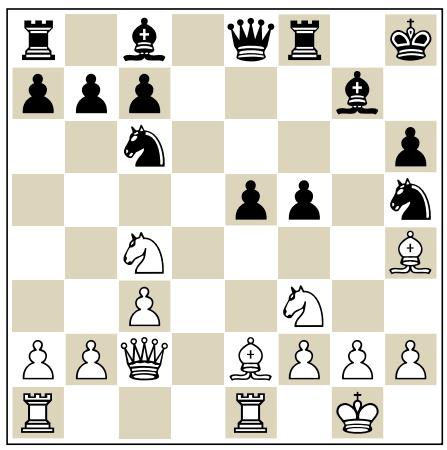
I remember facing Sasikiran as Black in Biel in 2004. I had 0/3, and when he played this move I had a sinking feeling, knowing he was keen to beat me and was in absolutely no hurry at all. I duly resigned on move 80. That might be the only time in history that the Torre has been a truly inspired opening choice – the rest of the time it is just pragmatic and solid. Black has various acceptable options and the main challenge is to avoid getting unduly excited.
3...♗g7 4.♘bd2 d6 5.c3 0-0 6.e4 ♘c6 7.♗e2 e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.0-0 h6 10.♗h4 ♕e8 11.♕c2 ♘h5 12.♖fe1



12...♔h8
All rather natural moves so far, but I spent rather a long time on this one. I couldn't quite see why I shouldn't play 12...f5 right away, even though it felt a bit premature: 13.exf5 gxf5 14.♘d4! is a crisp response (14...exd4?? 15.♗c4+), and Black is a bit loose.



13.♗f1
After a long think, but the position is already surprisingly concrete. Black wants to play ...f7-f5, and White will almost certainly have to play exf5 if he doesn't wish to end up with a bishop trapped on h4. So the pieces must be arranged with that in mind.
13.♘c4 was strongest, I think. During the game I had decided not to play 13...f5 here, and instead to play some quiet move like 13...♗e6. But the benefit is that White will have time to play ♘fd2, and f3, securing a retreat for the ♗h4: 13...f5? 14.exf5 gxf5 (14...♗xf5 15.♗d3 is unappealing)

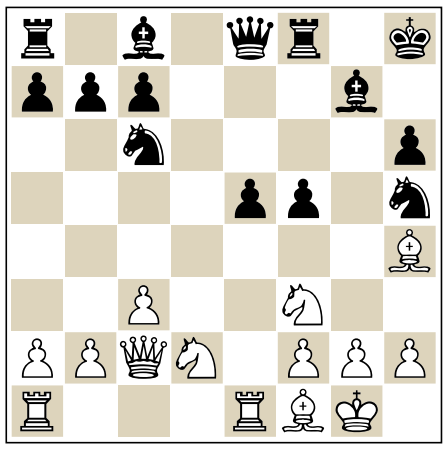


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

15.♘fxe5!! ♘xe5 (15...♗xe5 16.♗f3! wins material immediately) 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗f3!, and Black is in a terrible tangle and I simply didn't trust the position, even

though I couldn't see a forced win: 17...♘f6 (17...♘g7 18.♖ad1! is very strong, as we established in the post-mortem) 18.♕d2 f4 19.♕e2 ♘d7 20.♖ad1 obviously offers wonderful compensation.

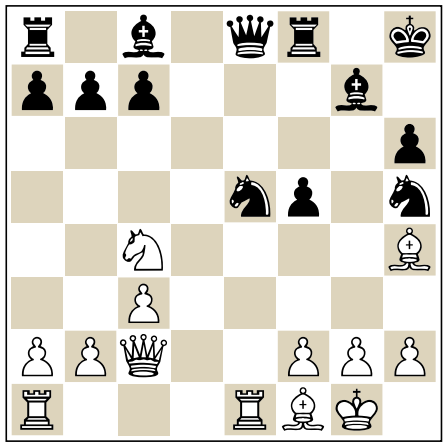
13...f5 14.exf5 gxf5



15.♘d4

A tactical move with a positional idea – White wants to exchange pieces and leave the central pawns looking loose.

I did actually notice that 15.♘xe5!? was possible, but I couldn't bring myself to be afraid of it. It's actually quite interesting though: 15...♘xe5 16.♘c4.

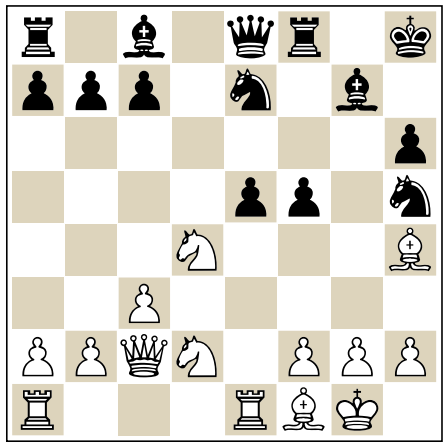


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The pin is still a serious problem. One plausible line is 16...♗d7 17.♕d2 ♘xc4 18.♗xc4 ♕c8 19.♗e7 ♗c6 20.♗e6 ♕e8 21.♗xf8 ♕xf8 22.♖ad1, which is hard to assess.

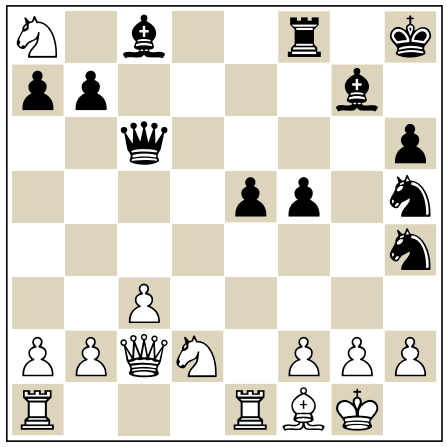
15...♘e7!

I'm quite proud of this combative response. It's certainly desirable to leave the ♘d4 in limbo and prepare ...♘e7-g6, hassling the bishop, but I had to make sure that ♘d4-b5 wouldn't cause a disaster. 15...♗d7 was almost automatic, but White has some pressure after 16.♘c4.



16.♕d1!?

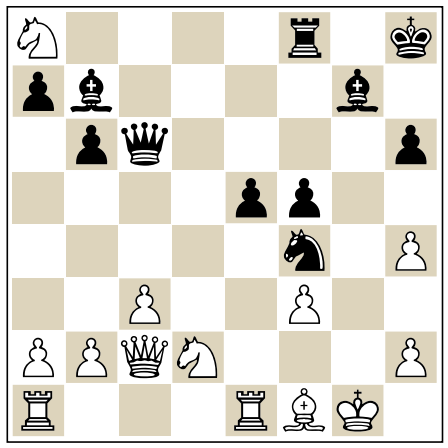
16.♘b5 was the critical variation. 16...♕d7 is very ugly, but the line I feared, 17.♕d1 ♘f4 18.♘b3, is not actually winning material after 18...♘eg6, with an unclear position. Still, my intended response was much more enterprising: 16...♘g6! 17.♘xc7 ♕c6 18.♘xa8 ♘xh4, reaching another crossroads. Before playing 15...♘e7, I looked at enough lines here to be happy with Black's chances.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

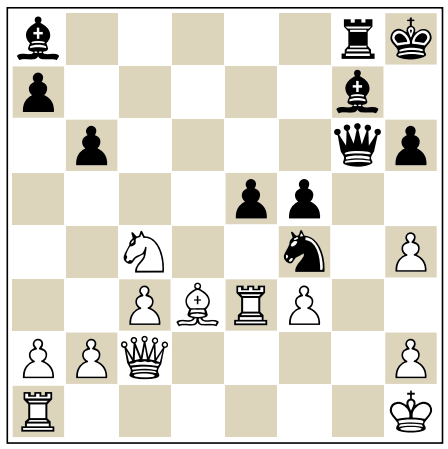
A) I thought 19.♕b3 ♗e6 20.♕b5 (20.♕b4 ♘f4! is extremely dangerous) 20...♕xb5 21.♗xb5 ♖xa8 would give Black the better side of an unclear position.

B) 19.g3 is the most testing option: 19...b6! (it's very important that the knight need not retreat to g6) 20.gxh4 ♗b7! (probably strongest – 20...♕g6+ 21.♔h1 ♗b7+ 22.f3 e4 was my more exotic main line, which is fun but might not be sound) 21.f3 ♘f4, and with simple play Black gets wonderful compensation.



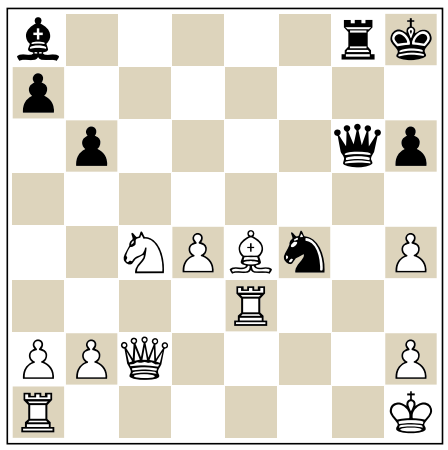
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Analysing a little deeper – with the help of a computer – I found an extraordinary variation: 22.♔h1 ♗xa8 23.♖e3 ♕g6 24.♘c4 ♖g8 25.♗d3, and now the fireworks can begin!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

25...e4! 26.fxe4 ♗d4! 27.cxd4 (27.♖g3 fxe4!; 27.h5 ♕g4! 28.♖g3 ♕xh5 also wins) 27...fxe4 28.♗xe4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

28...♘h3!!. Lovely geometry – mate cannot be avoided.

16...♘f4 17.♗xe7

Since the last few moves had taken us both quite some time, I wasn't surprised when my opponent chose this. The position becomes less sharp, and while objectively still equal I felt I had gained something, as Black has the easier game.

17...♕xe7 18.g3 ♘g6

18...♘d5 was possible, but I thought that ♘d4-f3-h4 would be somehow annoying.

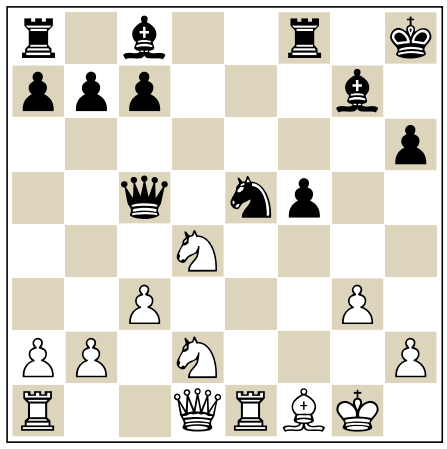
19.f4

Not forced, but positionally desirable. After 19...e4, I felt chances were about equal, as Black has a little more space but at least one knight will find an excellent post on e3. On the other hand, the move 19.f4 signals that White would be comfortable in such a position, so the move I chose is less cooperative.

19...♕c5

Pinning the knight is generally useful, and ♘d2-b3 is always met by ♕c5-b6.

20.fxe5 ♘xe5



21.♗g2?

21.♘f3! was the move which concerned me. Winning a pawn with 21...♘xf3+ 22.♕xf3 ♗xd4+ 23.cxd4 ♕xd4+ 24.♕e3 ♕xe3+ 25.♖xe3 is not very appealing, as only White can hope for an edge. I looked at both 21...♘g6 and 21...♘g4 but both are rather loose.

So after 21.♘f3!, 21...f4 is objectively strongest. After 22.♘xe5 ♗xe5 23.♔h1! (threatening 24.♕h5) the game is quite likely to peter out to a draw after some exchanges.

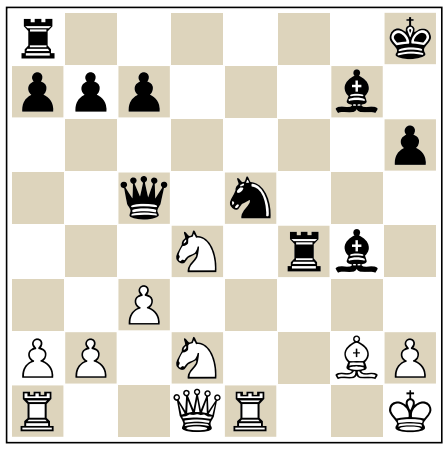
21...f4!

Now Black has the initiative.

22.gxf4

22.♕h5!? was a devious option, but Black keeps the advantage after 22...♕d6 (the tempting 22...♗g4? runs into 23.♖xe5 ♕xe5 24.♕xg4 ♕e3+ 25.♔h1 ♕xd2 26.♘e6!, and I hadn't seen that after 26...♖g8 White plays ♘xf4 with an ongoing attack).

22...♖xf4 23.♔h1 ♗g4



24.♕c2

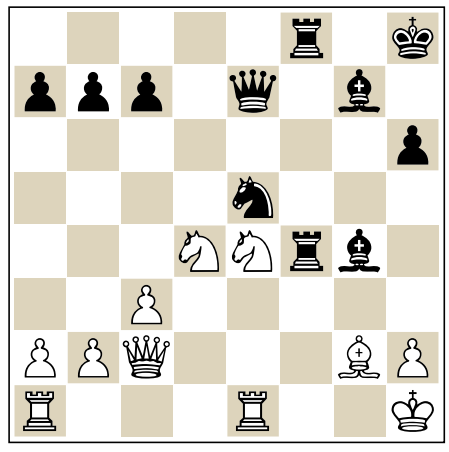
I was focusing on 24.♕b3 ♘d3, and supposed that by putting the queen on c2 my opponent had just cracked under the pressure of my magnificent play.

24...♖xd4?? was nearly wheeled out with a loud, proud crunching sound until I noticed 25.♘b3! with reciprocal crunching to follow.

24...♖af8 25.♘e4?!

Defending White's position is not at all easy, especially in time pressure. But it was essential to start exchanging pieces. After 25.♖f1 c6 26.♖xf4 ♖xf4 27.♖f1 ♕f8 White's chances are much improved, but with a strong pair of bishops, Black keeps an advantage even without the rooks.

25...♕e7



26.b4?!

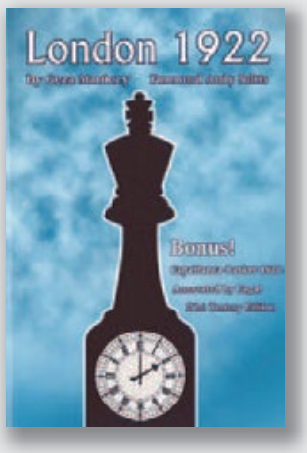
Securing the ♘d4 from ...c7-c5. Already 26.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 27.♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 28.♗xf1 ♕f7! is tactically inconvenient, hitting f1 and a2, but this was a lesser evil.

26...♕h4

The position develops quite naturally and Black's advantage should be decisive.

27.♘g3

Allowing a big tactical blow, but



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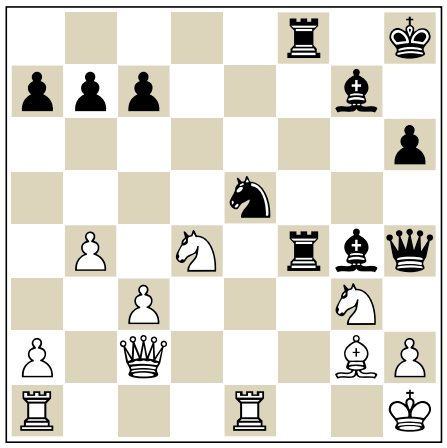
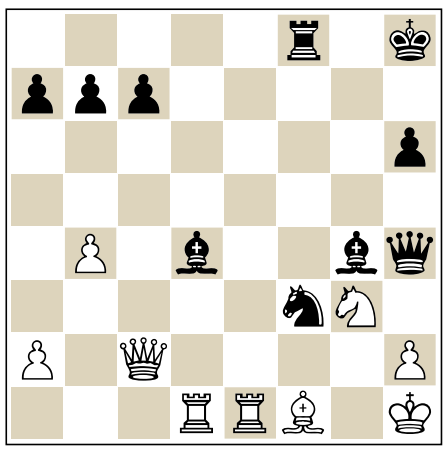
the alternatives weren't much better. For example, 27.♖f1 ♗h5! is cute, preparing ♘e5-g4 and ♗h5-g6.



27...♗d7?

It's a pity that I missed the winning blow 27...♖xd4!. Now after 28.cxd4 ♘f3 29.♗f1 (29.♘f1 ♘xe1) 29...♗xd4! (it's not that easy to see the most important threat here, but White can't do anything about it) 30.♖ad1 (what else?)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30...♘xh2! 31.♕xh2 ♗f3+ 32.♗g2 ♗xg2+ 33.♔xg2 ♖f2+ White is mated.

Still, I had two ideas, so I was hardly on the lookout for this. One was to play 27...♖f2. I saw that 28.♕e4 ♖8f4 29.♕xb7 ♘f3 was basically decisive, but I got a bit confused by the unusual clump of pieces and didn't fancy allowing a check on the eighth rank, so I went for the 'simpler' alternative in the game, preparing ...♘e5-g4.

28.♖f1

Of course! White will play ♘d4-f3 and recapture ♗g2xf3 when the queen covers h2 from the side. I kicked myself, but ploughed on, thanking my common sense for at least putting the bishop on d7 rather than c8.

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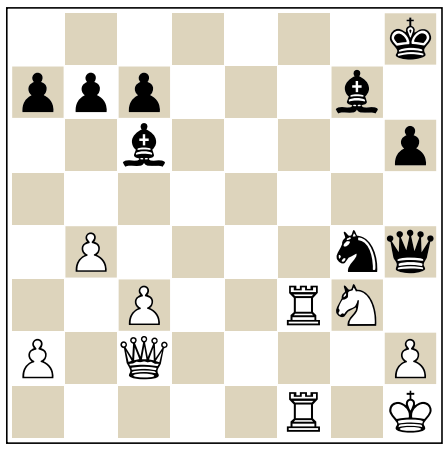
4	**Shabalov**	USA	2578	**7**
5	**Malaniuk**	UKR	2543	**7**
6	**Yoos**	CAN	2389	**7**
7	**Rozentalis**	LTU	2631	**6½**
8	**Gerzhoy**	CAN	2471	**6½**
9	**Samsonkin**	CAN	2401	**6½**
10	**Krnan**	CAN	2408	**6½**

265 players, 9 rounds

28...♘g4 29.♘f3 ♖xf3 30.♗xf3 ♖xf3 31.♖xf3 ♗c6 32.♖f1

A tricky decision with just a few minutes left – ...♘e5 or ...♘e3? I thought White would play ♕e2 after both, so I preferred to push the queen back to f1 with ...♘e3. But now I think the difference is much more significant.



32...♘e3!

After 32...♘e5 33.♕f5! is much the strongest move, which I had overlooked: 33...♕f6 34.♔g2 ♘xf3 35.♖xf3 ♗xf3+ 36.♕xf3 ♕xf3+ 37.♔xf3 ♗xc3 38.b5 seems to offer White good drawing chances.

Instead, after 32...♘e3 33.♕e2 ♘xf1 34.♕xf1 ♕f6! 35.♔g2 ♕xc3 Black seems to be winning: 36.b5 ♗xf3+ 37.♕xf3 ♕b2+ 38.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 39.♘xe2 ♗e5 40.h3 ♔g7 41.♔f3 ♔f6, and with a decent king the extra pawn should count.

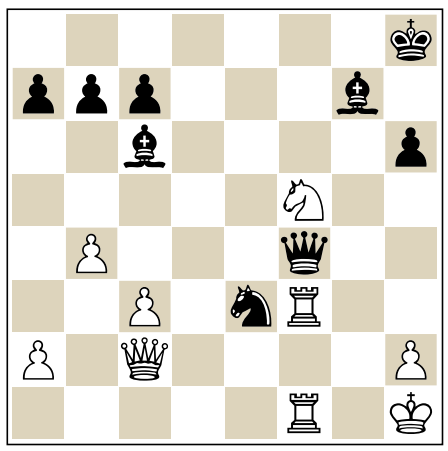
I also checked the funky option 33.♕g6 (instead of 33.♕e2) 33...♘xf1 34.♕xg7+! ♔xg7 35.♘f5+ ♔f6 36.♘xh4+ ♔g5 37.♔g1 ♗xf3 38.♘xf3+ ♔f4, with a big advantage in the knight endgame.

I was feeling exhilarated by all this calculation, until my opponent hovered his hand over the knight and I wondered if my last move was a terrible blunder.

33.♘f5!?

If I hadn't felt so bamboozled by this, I might have noticed that 33...♗xf3+ 34.♖xf3 ♕e1+ is a trivial mate. As it was, I saw that 33...♕g4 34.♘xe3 ♗xf3+ 35.♘g2 would leave Black struggling, but recovered my composure in time to find a much more effective square for the queen.

33...♕f4



34.♘xe3

I seem to share a blind spot with Vladimir Kramnik himself. I thought the best defence was 34.♕e2 ♘xf1 35.♕e8+, not noticing that 35...♔h7! 36.♕xc6 ♕xh2+ is mate!

34...♗xf3+ 35.♔g1

With the queen on f4, 35.♘g2 ♗e5 wins immediately.

35...♕xe3+ 36.♕f2 ♕g5+ 37.♕g3 ♕e3+ 38.♕f2 ♕g5+ 39.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 40.hxg3 ♗d5 41.♖d1 c6

White resigned. He loses another pawn immediately, so it's completely hopeless.

One hundred years of L'Italia Scacchistica

Fischerandom, or Chess960, was not an original idea of Bobby Fischer's. In fact, the first person who proposed to put the pieces on the first rank by lot in the initial position was the Dutch nobleman Jules van Zuylen van Nyevelt in his book *La supériorité des échecs mise à la portée de tout le monde et particulièrement des dames (*The superiority of chess made accessible to the entire world and particularly to the ladies), which was published in 1792. His idea was further promoted by his nephew, Elias van der Hoeven, who in 1851 played a game in this manner against Von der Lasa. But the first important game conducted in this way was between Marshall and Cohn, in Berlin, in November 1911.

Adolivio Capece

This and many more curiosities can be found in the 100 volumes of the Italian chess magazine *L'Italia Scacchistica*, or, to be more precise, in the first 99. The hundredth is still in progress, as the magazine celebrates its centenary in the autumn of this year.

L'Italia Scacchistica was established in Florence by Marquis Stefano Rosselli del Turco in the autumn of 1910. The first issue was published in early January 1911.

Stefano Rosselli del Turco, who was born in Florence in 1877, and died there in 1947, was Italian champion in the years 1923-28 and 1931-33. He played in five Olympiads and in 1925 he had a fine result in Baden-Baden, where he beat Tarrasch, Colle and Yates.

L'ITALIA SCACCHISTICA

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DELL'ACCADEMIA SCACCHISTICA DI VIAREGGIO
E DEL
CIRC. SCACCHISTICO DI BOLOGNA

Stefano Rosselli Del Turco, *Direttore*
Alberto Batori, *Direttore sezione problemi*

VOLUME I - ANNO 1911

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The war caused the death of many contributors but L'Italia Scacchistica survived.

L'ITALIA SCACCHISTICA

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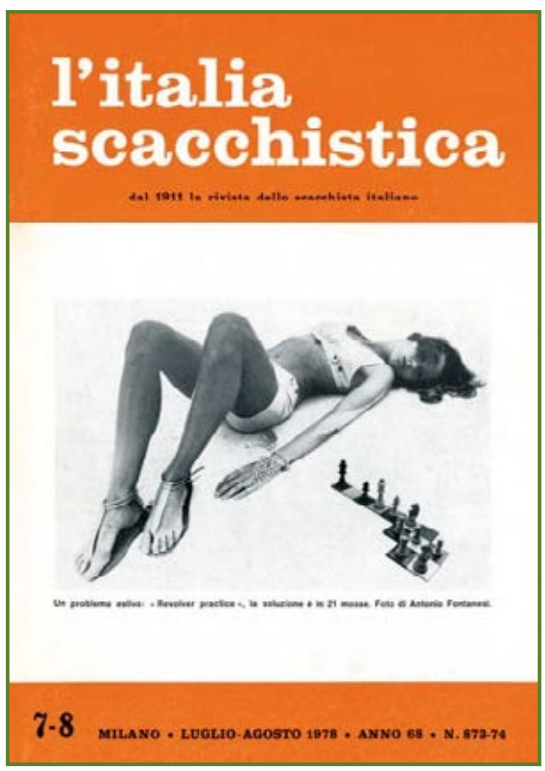
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dal 1911 la rivista dello scacchista italiano

Un problema estivo: «Revolver practice», la soluzione è in 21 mosse. Foto di Antonio Fontanesi.

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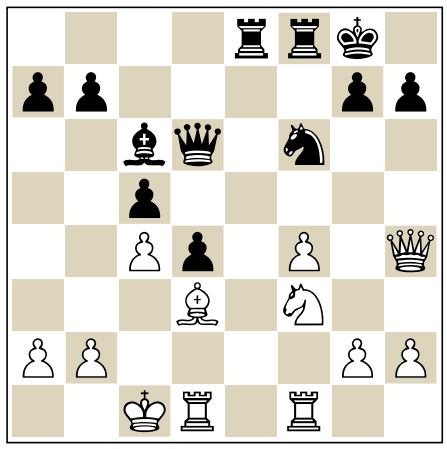
QO 16.6 – D30
Siegbert Tarrasch
Stefano Rosselli del Turco
Baden-Baden 1925

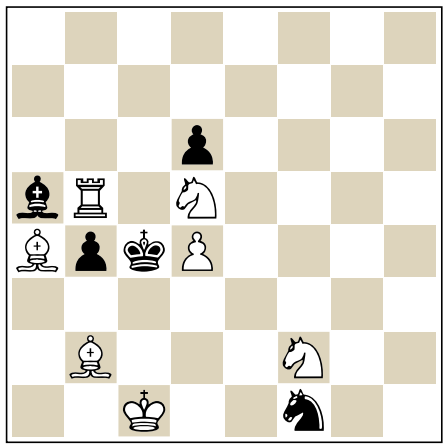
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.d4 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♗g5 ♘bd7 5.e3 ♗e7 6.♘bd2 ♘e4 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♘d2 f5 10.f3 exf3 11.♕xf3 0-0 12.0-0-0 e5 13.♕g3 f4 14.exf4 exd4 15.♘b3 c5 16.♗d3 ♕d6 17.♖hf1 ♘f6 18.♕h4 ♗d7 19.♘d2 ♖ae8 20.♘f3 ♗c6



21.♘e5 ♗e4 22.♗xe4 ♘xe4 23.♖f3 ♕e7 24.♕e1 ♘d6 25.♕a5 b6 26.♕d2 ♕e6 27.b3 ♘f5 28.♕d3 ♘e3 29.♖d2 ♕f5 30.♕xf5 ♖xf5 31.h3 ♘xg2 32.♖xg2 ♖exe5 33.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 34.♖g3+ ♔f6 35.fxe5+ ♔xe5 36.♖g2 ♖f3 37.♖h2 ♔f4 38.♖e2 ♖e3 39.♖f2+ ♔e4 40.♖f7 ♔d3 41.♔b2 ♖xh3 42.♖xa7 ♖h2+ 43.♔a3 ♔c3 44.♖d7 d3 45.♔a4 d2 46.♔b5 ♖h6
0-1.

L'Italia Scacchistica was born as the official bulletin of the clubs in Florence, Viareggio and Bologna, but in his first editorial Rosselli wrote that he aimed to connect 'all' Italian chess players. It was for this purpose that the magazine immediately started to organize correspondence tournaments.

In those days there was not that much news to write about and great events were rare, so many pages were devoted to problems under the supervision of Alberto Batori, an important Italian composer. Rosselli himself also composed some problems, four in all, as far as we know. His first problem was published in the magazine as number 43. It was a '2-mover' and we have to note that in those years the Italian problemists preferred '3-movers' (or problems with solutions of even more moves), because the '2-movers' were considered to be too difficult both to compose and to solve!



Stefano Rosselli
White mates in 2

1.♖b6!

Obviously, *L'Italia Scacchistica* devoted a lot of attention to Italian events right from the start. One of the most important tournaments in 1911 was played in San Remo. Most chess players have heard about San Remo 1930, won by Alekhine, but the edition of 1911 – to celebrate the first 50 years of Italy as a State (the 'Unity of Italy') – is much less known. One reason was that San Remo 1911 was played at more or less the same time as the legendary San Sebastian tournament won by Capablanca.

In San Remo, first place was claimed by Hans Fahrni, who scored 7½ points out of 10 and remained undefeated. Fahrni was Swiss (although he was born in Prague) and *L'Italia Scacchistica* writes that he came from 'Monaco di Baviera', which is Munich.

Second place was taken by Moissei Lowtzky from Leipzig and third by the Hungarian Leo Forgacs, who is probably better known under his German name, which was Fleischmann.

However, the main curiosity of this event was the international women's tournament! Unfortunately, not everything that was written about this tournament was accurate. For example, the Danish contestant is called Mrs Fiedge on one page and Mrs Tiedge on another. Miss Cotton from London, who came second, is first called Selma and then Helen. And another English player is introduced as Miss Smith from Cuningham, and next called Miss Smith-Cunighame from Edinburg.

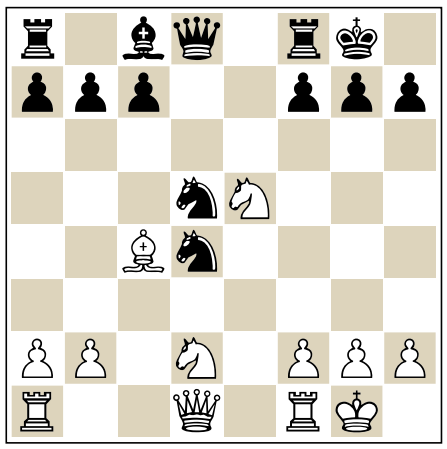
Apart from these players, nine more ladies took part in the event, the others being Kate Finn and Mrs Stevenson, both from London, Mrs Rentoul from Kensington, England, countess d'Arlay from Nice, France, Mrs Spalinger from Zurich, Switzerland, and countess Fossati from Turin, Italy, whom the magazine describes as 'the fearless Italian representative'. The tournament was won by Miss Kate Finn, but unfortunately there was no table with the final standings.

In the September issue we came across a game lost by Capablanca(!), one of his rare losses, which is not included in all databases. In the magazine there is no information about where and when it was played, but we have found out that it was played in the summer of 1911 during a simultaneous exhibition in Hamburg. Here is that game with the original notes from that issue.

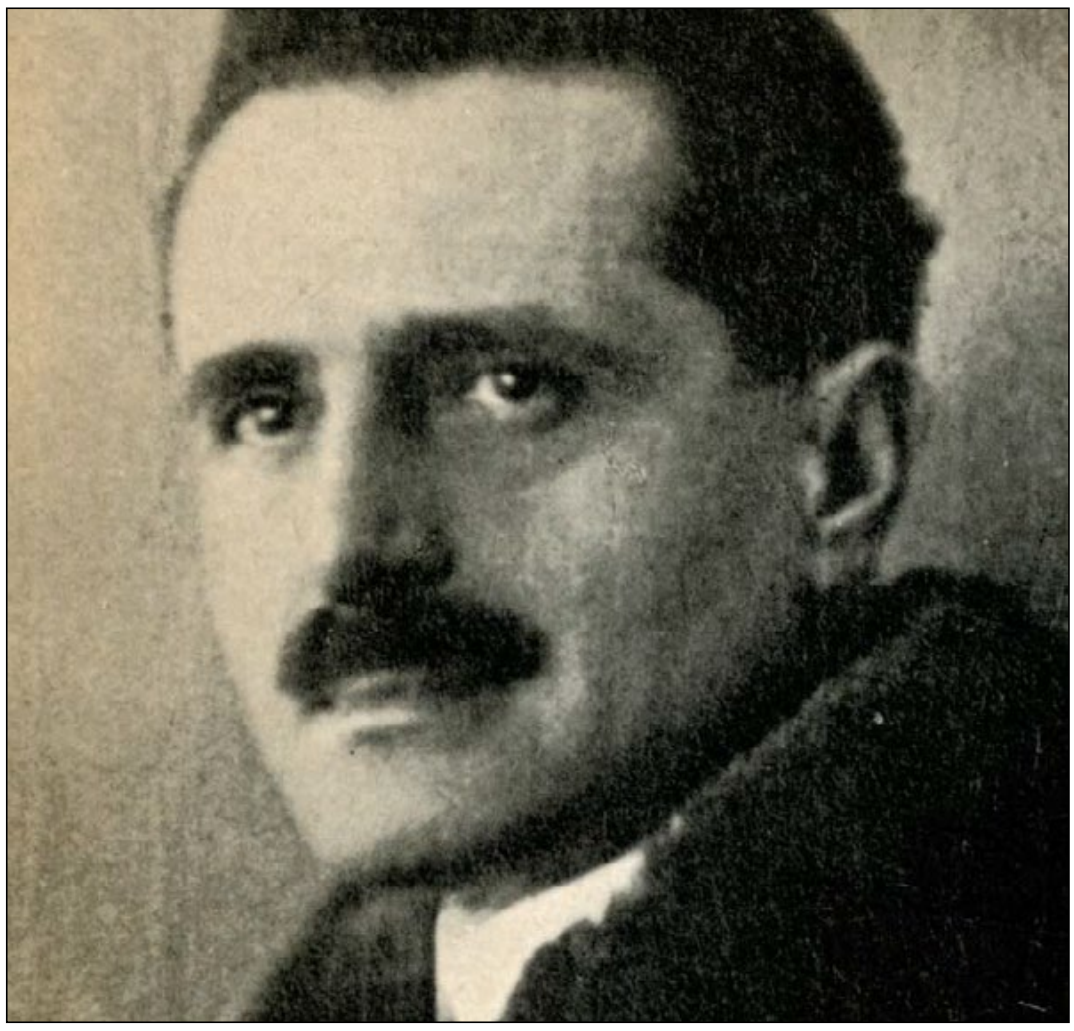
IG 2.5 – C54
Wilhelm Kluxen
Jose Raul Capablanca
Hamburg simul 1911

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+ 7.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 d5 9.

exd5 ♘xd5 10.0-0 More usual is 10.♕b3, as in Tarrasch-Capablanca, San Sebastian 1911. **10...0-0 11.♘e5** A novelty introduced by Kluxen himself. White gets a strong attack if Black accepts the pawn. **11...♘xd4** In a game played last May in Munich by a group of players in consultation against Rotlevy, Black played 11...♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘f4. The better move seems to be 11...♘ce7, followed by 12...f6.



12.♘b3! ♘xb3 During the postmortem Capablanca suggested 12...♘c6, but after 13.♘xf7 ♗g4 14.♗xd5 ♗xd1 15.♘xd8+ Black is lost. **13.♗xd5! ♘xa1?** Now White wins. According to Mr Bier, Black could have equalized with 13...♕f6, and now, for example, 14.♘xf7 ♘xa1, and White has nothing better than 15.♕xa1. **14.♗xf7+! ♔h8 15.♕h5 ♗f5** 15...g6 16.♘xg6+ ♔g7 17.♘xf8 ♕xf8 18.♗c4 ♕f6 19.♖xa1 wins. **16.♕xf5! ♕f6** A little bit better is 16...g6, but White should win after 17.♕f4. **17.♘g6+ ♕xg6 18.♗xg6 ♖xf5 19.♗xf5 g6 20.♗e4** Black resigned. If 20...♖e8 then 21.f3 wins.



L'Italia Scacchistica was established in Florence by Marquis Stefano Rosselli del Turco in the autumn of 1910. The first issue was published in early January 1911.

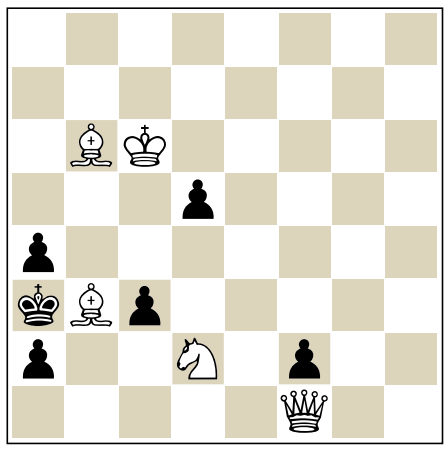
At the outbreak of World War I, Rosselli was called up for the army, and Alberto Batori became the editor of the magazine. Batori was a soldier, too, but he was employed in an office and did not have to go to the front.

The war caused the death of many contributors but *L'Italia Scacchistica* survived and sometimes even was the only connection between the chess players at the front and their families at home.

After the war, thanks to Capablanca, chess grew widely in popularity, also in Italy, and *L'Italia Scacchistica* profited from this growth. Batori was the editor up to November 1923, when owing to a nasty illness he passed away, not yet 40.

After his sad death Rosselli, who in April of that same year had won the title of Italian Champion, came back and gave a great stimulus to the magazine. Starting from March 1927 it became a fortnightly!

In the years 1927-1929 the problem section was directed by Luigi Ceriani, a chess player known worldwide for his retrograde studies. But he was also a good composer of 2- and 3-movers. His first ever problem to be published appeared in *La Domenica del Corriere*, the weekly magazine of the newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, number 8, February 1911.



Luigi Ceriani
White mates in 3

1.♗d4

The advent of Alexander Alekhine was of great importance for chess in Italy. In 1930 the famous San Remo tournament was organized with Rosselli as its director. Leafing through the issues of that year one can see that *L'Italia Scacchis-*

tica was an active witness of the great events that were taking place worldwide. Numerous grandmasters sent annotated games, others sent news from tournaments all over the world, and the pages were brimming with new opening ideas and other novelties. In the September 1933 issue, for example, there is a whole section with news from Holland, which also included the sad news of the death of Dr A.S. Olland from Utrecht, 'a leading personality in Dutch chess circles', who died of a heart attack during a game against M. Hamming, which was played in the Dutch championship won by Max Euwe.

In the December 1935 issue we find an official overview of a simultaneous exhibition records:
– 50 games, Varese, September 20, 1922, Luigi Miliani (+36 =10 –4 in 5 hours and 15 minutes);
– 60 games, Firenze, December 17, 1933, Stefano Rosselli del Turco (+41, =16, –3 in 6 hours and 28 minutes);
– 70 games, Milano, November 10, 1935, Mario Monticelli (+50 =13 –7 in 5 hours and 54 minutes).

Chess was blossoming in the 1930s, especially in Florence, the home of *L'Italia Scacchistica*. In Florence the chess club gathered in the famous Cafè 'Giubbe Rosse' (red jackets), which is still in existence. Among the players there was a young lady, Clarice Benini – born in 1905 – who in 1937 was second in the Women's World Championship behind the unbeatable Vera Menchik. Another habitué at the Giubbe Rosse in those years was the famous poet and Nobel laureate Eugenio Montale. It seems that Montale fell in love with Clarice and dedicated a poem to her, but the affection was not reciprocated.

During the Second World War *L'Italia Scacchistica* was able to survive up to 1943. In the first issue of that year it says that *L'Italia Scacchistica* 'put on the uniform and cancelled the cover, the photos, the great diagrams...' However, at the end of 1943 the government forced the editor to stop completely, as paper was to be used for military purposes only!

At this point Rosselli del Turco resigned as editor, but he did not want the magazine to cease to exist for good. He started looking for a new patron and found one in his friend Count Gian Carlo dal Verme, who would be President of the Italian Chess Federation in the years 1947-48 and from 1958 to 1979. In 1945 the editorial office of the magazine moved from Florence to Milan and Dal Verme found a new editor, Giovanni Ferrantes, an Italian chess master and arbiter. Ferrantes was a printer by profession and since 1932 he had been contributing weekly columns to various Italian magazines.

At the end of 1945 the first new issue was printed, and the leading article was entitled '*L'Italia Scacchistica* takes on a new lease of life!' Nothing had changed in comparison with the previous issues. The magazine continued to organize correspondence tournaments and problem contests, and to print news, annotated games and theoretical articles. Its particular size (17x24 cm) was also maintained.

The first issue of the 'new era' started with some ancient games, and the numbering of games, problems and studies started from 1 again. Number 1 was Monticelli's win against Prokes in Budapest 1929, number 2 was Euwe's win against Prins in Zandvoort 1936.

New contributors arrived and many of them also became known outside Italy, such as Rinaldo Bianchetti, who took legal action against Marcel Duchamp and Halberstadt for plagiarism, or Eduardo Jorge Marchisotti, a leading theoretician, who was born in Argentina but moved to Uruguay when he was about 30 years old.

Another new name was Adriano Chicco, who took care of the problem section. However, everyone knows that Chicco was first and foremost an historian who wrote many interesting articles on the history of chess or the connection between chess and literature, painting or cinema. Together with Giorgio Porreca he wrote the *Dizionario Enciclopedico degli Scacchi* (Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Chess), which was published in Milan in 1971.

Thanks to Chicco we know more about the Dutch painter Lucas van Leyden, who in a picture portrays a gentleman and a lady playing 'Kurierschach' (courier chess) on a chess board of 12x8 squares. And we owe it to him that we know that Chaucer and Shakespeare and Italian poets and writers such as Dante Alighieri, Boccaccio and Ugo Foscolo played chess. And Giacomo Leopardi, who fell in love with a girl and won her love showing his great ability in chess. And also Carlo Goldoni, who in his comedy *Il Burbero benefico* (the rough diamond) dedicates a whole act to a chess game.

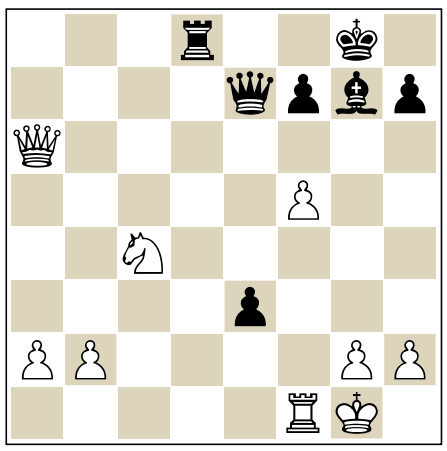
Another important contributor was Enrico Paoli (grandmaster honoris causa in 1996), the 'father' of the international tournament in Reggio Emilia. One of his innovations was that he began to annotate games for the readers against payment. Later on he started with a column named 'Teoria e pratica' (theory and practice) that went on until 1952. Then the column was discontinued, only to be resumed again ten years later. At that point Paoli decided to add 'poetry' so that the new title was 'Poesia, teoria e pratica', a column that he wrote almost up to his death, a few weeks before his 98th birthday, in

December 2005. His column was a collection of curiosities, news, endgames, studies, strange games, history, biography and sometimes 'gossip', each item numbered, similar to Edward Winter's *Chess Notes*. It's a treasure trove from which we still draw.

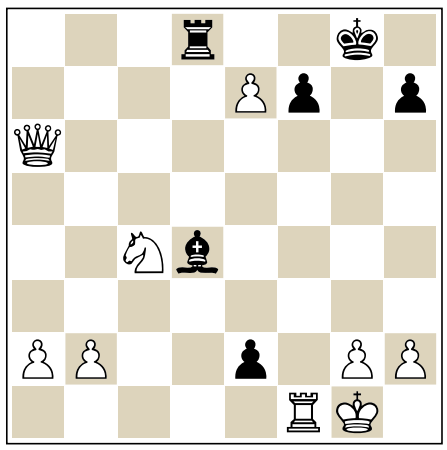
In his first column (number 1) in November 1963, Paoli analyses the Taimanov Variation of the Sicilian, starting from an article by Max Euwe, and presenting the first moves of his own game against Lokvenc in Miskolc, which contained a theoretical novelty.

Paoli had a wonderful memory and never forgot what he had written in his earlier columns. For example, he was interested in games in which a player resigns in a winning position, in particular if the last move of his opponent was a mistake. He called this 'double chess blindness'. In the issue of December 1976 he wrote that Tarrasch defines 'chess blindness' as 'chess amoràusa'. He remained astonished about this strange word until two years later a reader wrote that it must be a printing error: the correct word is 'amauròsi', from the Greek, meaning 'blindness'. Remembering all this, in May 1986 (ten years later!) he presented an example in which not only the players but also the annotator fell into the trap!

In the game Jonasson-Angantysson, Iceland 1984, the following position was reached after 25 moves.



Now White played **26.f6** and Black replied **26...e2?** The winning move was 26...♗xf6, and now 27.♕xf6 ♕xf6 28.♖xf6 ♖d1+ 29.♖f1 e2, and wins: 30.♘e3 ♖xf1+ or 30.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 31.♔f2 ♖c1. **27.fxe7 ♗d4+**



28. Resigns ???

Paoli now wrote that grandmaster Michael Stean had published this game in his column in *The Observer*, also without realizing that White's resignation was a stupid mistake. In fact, White wins after 28.♘e3!!, because after 28...♗xe3+ 29.♔h1 the white rook is defended by the queen!

Paoli wrote: 'Neither the two players nor the annotator realized the mistake. Triple chess blindness!'

As of April 1950, *L'Italia Scacchistica* became the official house organ of the Italian Chess Federation. This agreement lasted till 1970, when the sudden leap in popularity of chess thanks to Bobby Fischer led to the birth of other magazines in Italy and Gian Carlo dal Verme, in order to avoid problems, decided to stop the cooperation between the Federation and *L'Italia Scacchistica*.

Nevertheless, the 1970s were golden years for the magazine. Among the news items in the July 1971 issue there is one that says that during the opening of the XIX Olympiad in Siegen in 1970 the President of the German Federation, Mr Schneider, presented Mr Rogard, the retiring president of FIDE, with a flag on which there was embroidered the motto 'Gens Una Sumus' – it was the first time that FIDE had such a flag (and that the motto had been made official).

Giovanni Ferrantes remained editor of *L'Italia Scacchistica* for 47 years, which may be a record. In his last years he was helped by his son-in-law Vittorio Dina, but in 1992 he decided to retire because of his age. At that point he was 89 years old, and he would die three years later. He entitled his farewell article 'Ad multos annos': and we can say that for all those 47 years he really was the main reference for chess in Italy.

In September 1992 I became the editor of *L'Italia Scacchistica* and decided to print the magazine in colour (we were one of the first chess magazines to do so). For the rest nothing was changed, with the exception of the organization of correspondence tournaments. The magazine retained its particular size and continues to organize problem contests and to print news, annotated games and theoretical articles by leading players such as Karpov, Gelfand, Tiviakov and Cebalo. From a monthly we have changed into publishing eight issues a year, just like *New In Chess*. Each issue has 64 pages.

Adolivio Capece is a journalist by profession and a chess master. He played the World Junior Championship in Barcelona in 1965 and the Olympiad in Skopje in 1972. His contribution to the theory of the Caro-Kann is the variation 1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♘e5, which he introduced in a tournament in 1962. He has written about ten chess books, mainly instructional, and has written columns for the most important Italian newspapers and magazines.

Caruana clinches Biel in tie-break

The 43rd Biel Chess Festival rolled out the red carpet for youth. The entire top group was composed of junior grandmasters from nine different countries. The youngest contestants were 16-year-olds Anish Giri and Wesley So, while at 23, 2009 European champion Evgeny Tomashevsky was clearly the oldest. After a tense and close race, top-seed Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2723) finished shared first with Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son (2617) and Fabiano Caruana (2697). In the blitz tiebreak the Italian grandmaster prevailed to claim one of his finest victories to date. The next day he celebrated his 18th birthday.

With so many young dogs around, frolicking fights and wild tussles seemed guaranteed. After all, what sense would it make to play it safe and solid in a world-famous tournament where you can put yourself in the spotlight? Quite unexpectedly, the statistics seemed to tell a different story, with more than two-thirds of the games ending in draws. Many of these draws were certainly hard-fought and took many hours, but there were also a number of games where it was difficult to understand why the players split the point or offered to do so. Fabiano Caruana admitted that David Howell might have played on in the final position of their game in the last round, and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave was not too happy about his draw offer in that same last round to Parimarjan Negi. Afterwards he blamed his decision on a hallucination that had kept him from understanding what was really going on on the board. However, easily hardest to grasp was the last-round draw offer by Dmitry Andreikin, who could still have won the tournament if he had managed to beat Wesley So. Luckily for him, his opponent declined and he even got winning chances, but in the end 'justice was done' when So saved his skin.

These draws did happen, but before a one-sided picture arises, let us stress that there were enough uncompromising games, as you can see from the highlights we asked some of the players to annotate. We also asked them to share their overall impressions.

Winner Fabiano Caruana reacted with admirable objectivity: 'Before the tournament I wasn't entirely sure about my chances. Although by rating I was one of the favourites, I had never faced the majority of the players, so they were a little bit of a mystery to me. Considering that all of them were young 'up-and-coming' players, I was sure that at least one of them would be in great form and play very well. But it was impossible to predict who would be my most dangerous opponent.

'My game against Wesley So was crucial for the whole tournament. He had started very well with 3/4, and if I won I would overtake him and go into first place. In the first half of the game he played strongly and had an advantage, but in the second half he began to commit many mistakes. I won an endgame in which I had only had a tiny advantage to begin with.

'My play remained constant throughout the tournament – solid, sensible, but certainly not brilliant.

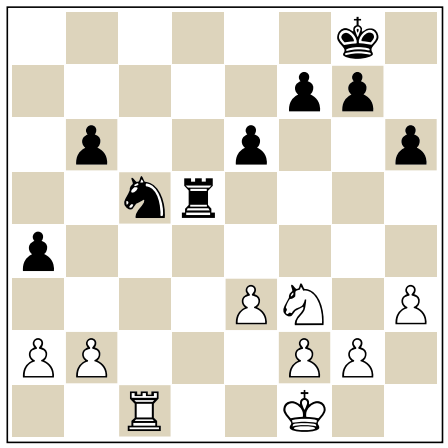
Fabiano Caruana: 'My play remained constant throughout the tournament – solid, sensible, but certainly not brilliant.'

BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

And while, in the first half of the tournament, this worked very well, in the last four games I was unable to score another win. I should say that I didn't play badly in the second half, but my opponents played quite well. The only game where I had any advantage was against Anish Giri, and this only lasted five moves at the most.'

Caruana described the course of the tiebreak as 'as expected – meaning that it was completely unpredictable.' He won both his blitz matches (games of 10 minutes per player plus 10 seconds per move) against Vachier-Lagrave and Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, but admitted he came close to defeat in both matches. 'Somehow luck, and perhaps tenacious defending, were on my side.'

Tournament victory was decided in the blitz match against Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, the 20-year-old Vietnamese grandmaster, who could look back on a solid performance in Biel. He started with seven draws and then moved up to shared first place with wins over Tomashevsky and Giri. The first blitz game ended in a draw after 64 moves. Here is the decisive part of the second game with **comments by Caruana**, followed by his notes to the 'crucial game of the tournament'.



Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son-Caruana
position after 28.♔f1

This endgame looks completely equal, but White has to show some accuracy.

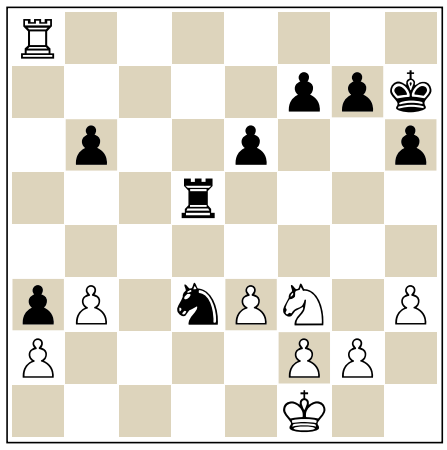
28...♘d3 29.♖c8+

This and the next move mark the start of White's downfall. Simple play would have sufficed: 29.♖c2 ♖c5 (29...♖b5 is met by 30.♔e2) 30.♖d2 ♘c1 31.a3 ♘b3 32.♖d8+ ♔h7 33.♘e1 ♖c1 34.♔e2 ♖b1 35.♘d3, with a draw, was a possible continuation of the game.

29...♔h7 30.b3?

A real lemon. 30.♖c2 was still possible.

30...a3 31.♖a8

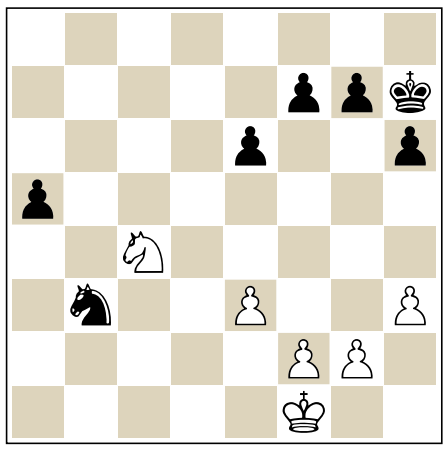


31...♖a5!

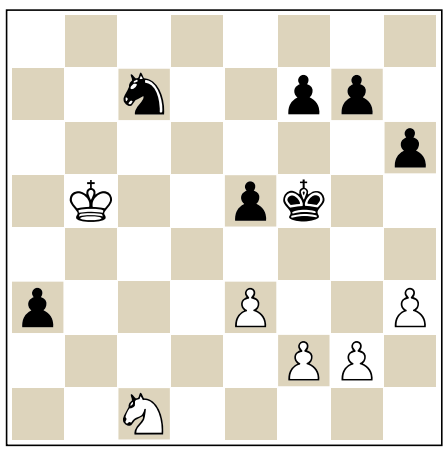
My opponent had probably missed this.

32.♖xa5 bxa5 33.♘d4 ♘b4 34.♘b5 ♘xa2 35.♘xa3 ♘c1 36.♘c4 ♘xb3

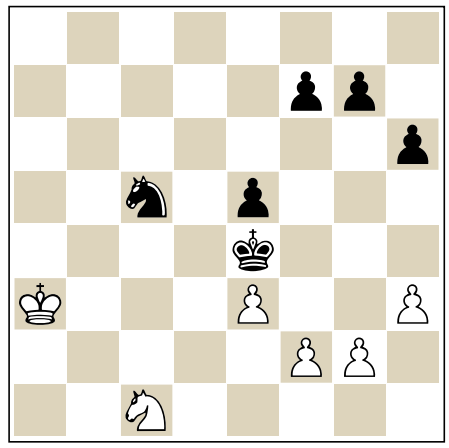
Finally we reached a very complicated endgame in which it's not clear whether White will be able to hold the draw. In a blitz game, in any case, the practical problems are considerable. White's problem is capturing the a-pawn while keeping contact with his kingside. In the game he didn't manage.



37.♔e2 a4 38.♔d3 ♔g6 39.♔c3 ♘c5 40.♔d4 ♘a6 41.♘e5+ ♔f6 42.♘d3 e5+ Even stronger was 42...♔e7 43.♔c3 ♔d6 44.♘b2 ♘c5 45.♔b4 ♔d5, and Black should win. **43.♔c4 ♔f5 44.♔b5 a3 45.♘c1 ♘c7+**



46.♔c4 46.♔b4 ♘d5+ 47.♔xa3 ♔e4 48.♔b3 ♘xe3! surprisingly seems winning for Black: 49.fxe3 ♔xe3 50.♔c4 ♔f2 51.♘d3+ ♔xg2 52.♘xe5 f6, and three pawns will prove too much for the knight. **46...♘e6 47.♔b3 ♘c5+ 48.♔xa3 ♔e4**



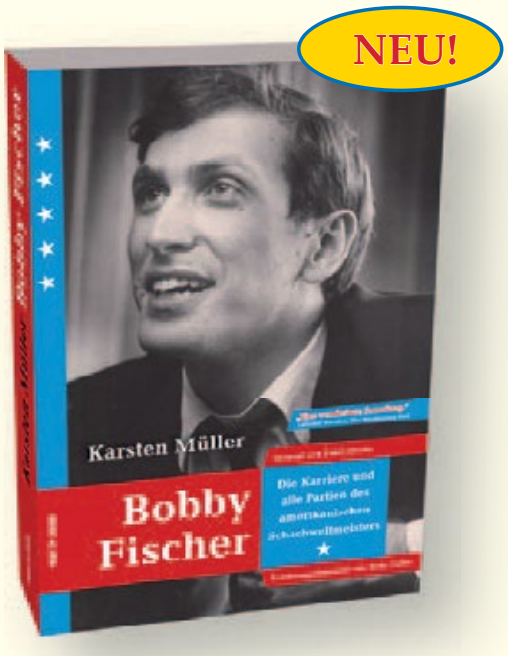
White's king is too far from the action on the kingside. He is lost.

49.♔b2 ♘d3+ 50.♔c2 ♘xf2

This endgame is completely won, because the e-pawn is so weak.

51.♔d2 ♔d5 52.♔e2 ♘e4 53.♘d3 ♘c5 54.♘b4+ ♔e4 55.♘a2 ♘a4 56.♔d2 f5 57.♔e2 g5 58.♔d2 h5 59.♔e2 g4 60.hxg4 fxg4 61.g3 ♔d5 62.♘b4+ ♔c4 63.♘c6 ♘c3+ 64.♔f2 ♔d5 65.♘e7+ ♔e4 66.♘g8 ♔d3 67.♔g1 ♘e4 68.♔g2 ♔xe3 69.♘e7 ♘f6 70.♘f5+ ♔d3 71.♔f2 e4 72.♘e3 h4 73.♘g2 e3+

White resigned.



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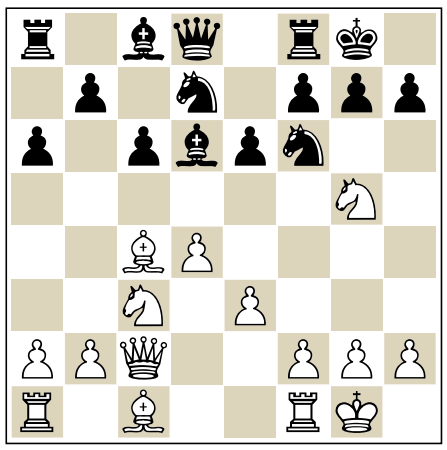
NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

SL 8.4 – D46
Fabiano Caruana
Wesley So
Biel 2010 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4 9.♗xc4 a6 10.♘g5!?

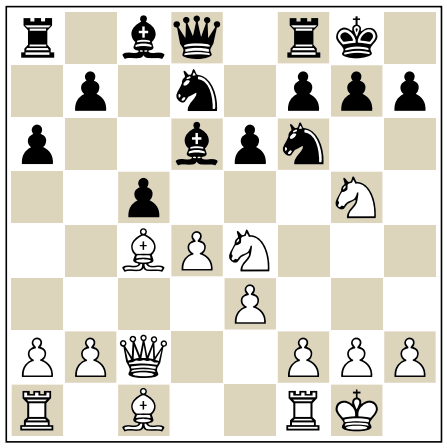


It's hard to find interesting ideas for White in the Meran, so I decided to try this rare move, which objectively offers no advantage, but at least can boast some surprise value.

10...c5

A clean equalizer. In the only game I have with 10.♘g5 (Zviagintsev-Krasenkow, Tripoli 2004), 10...♗xh2+ 11.♔xh2 ♘g4+ 12.♔g1 ♕xg5 13.f3 ♘gf6 14.e4 ♕h4 was played and here, instead of Zviagintsev's 15.♕f2, I had planned 15.♗e3, with reasonable compensation for the pawn.

11.♘ce4



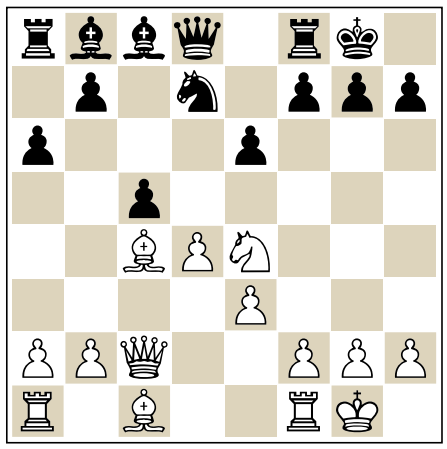
11...♕c7

However, this is not the best way.

Ironically, the best way to protect c5 is to lose control over it!: 11...♘xe4 12.♘xe4, and now:

A) After 12...♗e7 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5 15.♗xe6 ♗xe6 16.♕xc5 ♖c8 17.♕b4 Black doesn't seem to have enough for the pawn;

B) But my opponent and I had both missed 12...♗b8!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♘xc5 ♕c7 15.g3 ♕xc5 leads to a symmetrical and completely equal position.

12.♘xd6 ♕xd6

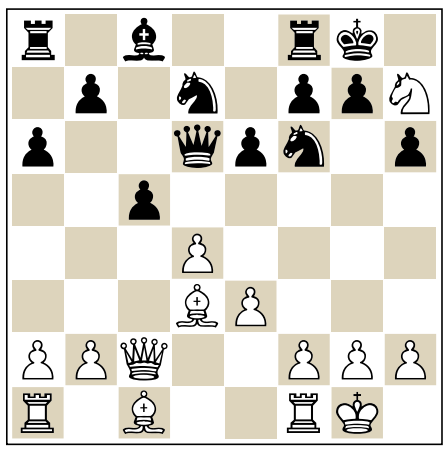
Now White has the bishop pair, but matters are far from simple because of the awkward position of the knight on g5.

13.♗d3!?

This is an ambitious and risky move. However, I wasn't satisfied with the alternatives.

I especially wanted to avoid a scenario like 13.♖d1 cxd4 14.♖xd4 ♕c5 15.♘f3 b5 16.♗d3 ♗b7, when Black has developed comfortably and White is already under some pressure.

13...h6 14.♘h7



14...♘g4!

Critical and strong. But it also takes a lot of calculation, which left Wesley a bit short of time.

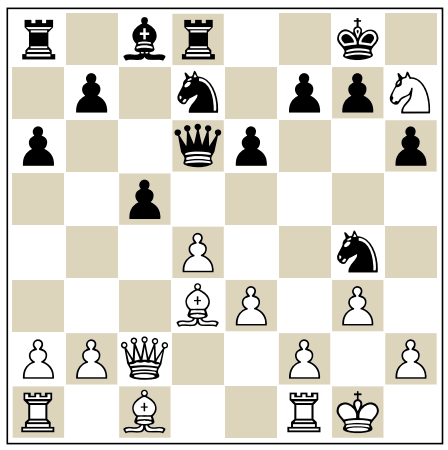
On the other hand, 14...♘xh7 15.♗xh7+ ♔h8 16.dxc5 ♕xc5 17.♗e4 ♕xc2 18.♗xc2 is not very exciting for Black. He has good chances to hold a draw, but it's a long and unpleasant job.

15.g3

Now things are heating up, but to keep the momentum I continued to play quickly.

15.f4 ♖d8 16.h3 was also possible, but again it falls short against accurate play: 16...cxd4 (16...♘xe3? is very risky now: 17.♗xe3 cxd4 18.♗f2 f5 19.♗h4 ♖e8 20.♖ae1 ♔xh7 21.♗xf5+ ♔h8 22.♗g6 ♖f8 23.♕e4, and it's unlikely that Black will be able to hold the position) 17.hxg4 ♘c5 18.e4 ♗d7 (the simplest way for Black is to develop, since the knight on h7 will be unable to escape in the long run) 19.e5 ♕d5, and White's position is extremely shaky: 20.♗c4 d3! 21.♕c3 ♕e4, finally winning the wayward knight, with a large advantage.

15...♖d8



16.h3

Maybe 16.f3!? would have been more testing:

A) 16...cxd4 17.fxg4 ♘c5 18.g5!, with a strong attack. Now White profits from the open f-file;

B) 16...♘de5 17.fxg4 cxd4 18.g5! (the same idea!) 18...dxe3 19.♗e2, again with a large advantage;

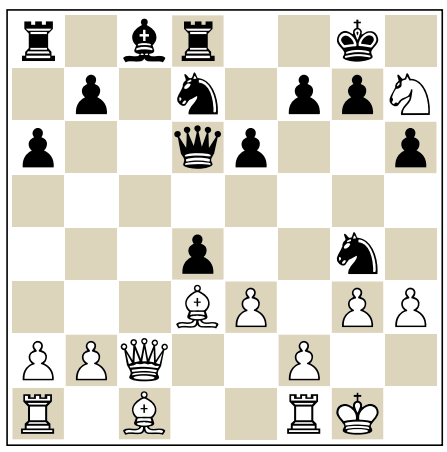
C) 16...♘gf6 17.dxc5 ♘xc5

18.♘xf6+ gxf6 19.♗e2 ♗d7 20.e4, with a clear advantage due to the bishop pair and Black's doubled f-pawns;

D) 16...♘xe3 17.♗xe3 cxd4 18.♗f4 e5 19.♗d2 g6 20.♗xh6 ♔xh7 21.♗g5 ♖e8 22.♖ac1, and White has some compensation for the pawn, but certainly not enough for an advantage.

16...cxd4

16...♘xe3 was also possible: 17.♗xe3 cxd4 18.♗d2 f5 19.♗f4 (19.♖ae1? ♘e5 wins for Black) 19...e5 20.♗g5! hxg5 21.♘xg5 (against all odds, the knight has survived! White also wins the f5 pawn, but without improving his position) 21...♘f6 22.♗xf5 ♗xf5 23.♕xf5, with an unclear position. Black has a strong passed d-pawn, but his weak king will always be an issue.



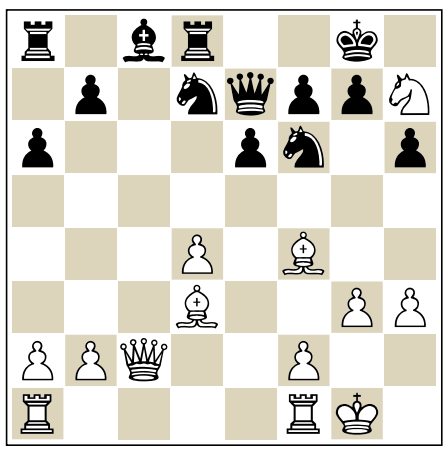
17.exd4

I wasn't satisfied with the complications arising after 17.hxg4:

17...♘e5 18.♗e4 (18.exd4 ♘f3+ 19.♔g2 ♘xd4 20.♕b1 f5 21.♘f6+ gxf6 22.gxf5 exf5 23.♗xh6 b5 is what I calculated during the game. White has serious problems with his weak king.

The computer suggests the surprising 18.g5!?, a move no human would consider. Best play seems to result in a draw after 18...♘xd3 19.♕xd3 dxe3 20.♕xe3 ♔xh7 21.gxh6 ♕d4) 18...d3 19.♕b3 ♗d7! 20.f4 ♘xg4. This is where my calculations ended. Although White nominally is a piece up, to all intents and purposes the h7 knight is dead. It will soon fall, after which Black will have a winning advantage.

17...♘gf6 18.♗f4 ♕e7

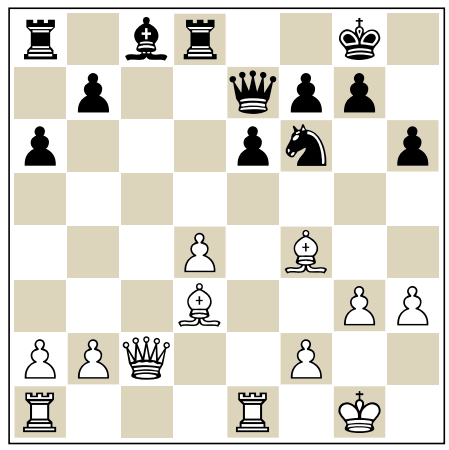


19.♘xf6+

I burned up a lot of time on this move, desperately trying to make 19.♗c7 work. Finally, I resigned myself to a statically inferior position.

19.♗c7 ♘d5! was an unpleasant wake-up call. Once I had seen this, I realized the trouble I was in. After 20.♗xd8 ♕xd8 in all variations the knight on h7 is lost: 21.♕e2 (21.♗e4 ♘7b6; 21.♖fe1 ♘7b6) 21...♘b8! 22.♕h5 f5 23.♕g6 ♘c6, and Black will win.

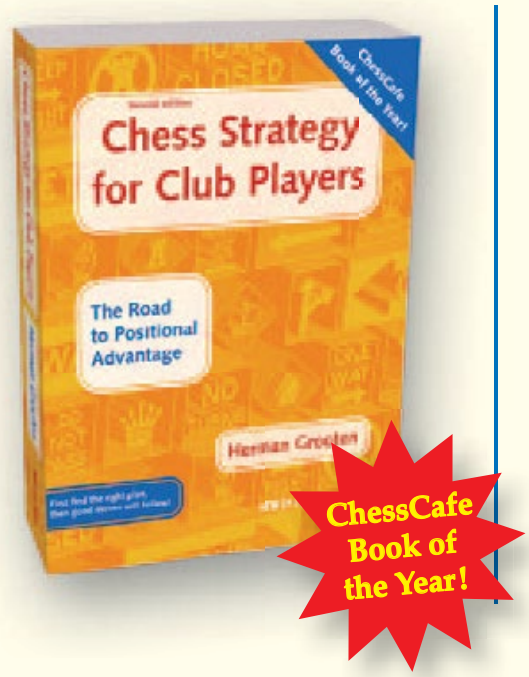
19...♘xf6 20.♖fe1



20...b5?!

Returning the favour!

The easiest way for Black to play was 20...♘d5 21.♕d2 ♗d7 (21...♘xf4 22.♕xf4 ♕d6 23.♕e4 offers White counterplay), and now:



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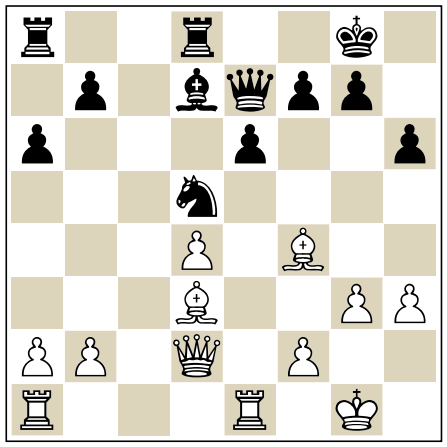


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

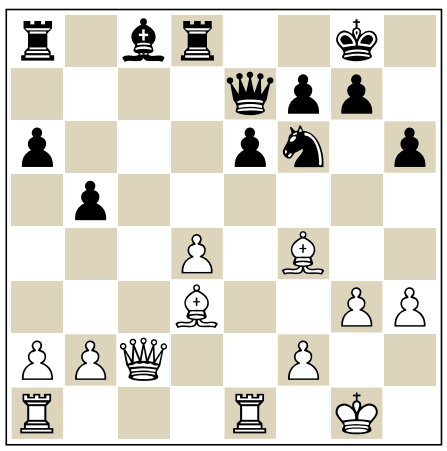
A) 22.♖e5 ♘xf4 23.♕xf4 ♗c6, with a slight but lasting advantage;

B) 22.♗xh6 doesn't work: 22...gxh6 23.♕xh6 f6 24.♖e4 f5 25.♖h4 ♕g7, and Black wins;

C) After the game Wesley mentioned 22.♗e5!? ♗c6 23.♗c2, with the idea of ♕d3, which offers some counterplay, but Black still seems better.

Black could also try the complicated 20...♗d7 21.♕c7 ♘d5 22.♕xb7 ♘xf4 23.gxf4 ♕d6 24.♕e4 g6, with good compensation for the pawn due to White's wrecked pawn structure.

I didn't consider the thoughtless capture of the d-pawn with 20...♖xd4?!. Although objectively it might be OK, it allows White a much easier game.



21.♗c7!

A nice tactical resource that my opponent had missed. I spotted this pretty fast, because for the last few moves I had been desperately looking at any and all tactical ideas.

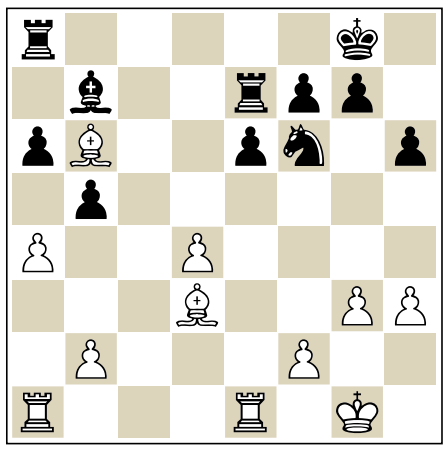
21...♖d7

21...♖xd4?! is not a good idea: 22.♕c6 ♖xd3 23.♕xa8 ♕xc7 24.♖ac1, and here the only move is 24...♖xg3+, which the computer insists is not so bad for Black, although only a madman would play this way.

22.♕c6 ♖a7 23.♗b6 ♗b7 24.♕c5 ♖a8 25.♕xe7

I was very happy to trade queens and go into a safe endgame with a miniscule advantage.

25...♖xe7 26.a4



26...♘d7

26...b4 was also possible, when it's unlikely that White will be able to break Black's fortress; but Wesley's move is easier.

In fact, the simplest way to make a draw was 26...bxa4 27.♖xa4 ♘d5 28.♗c5 ♖d7 29.♖ea1 ♖b8, and White won't be able to make progress.

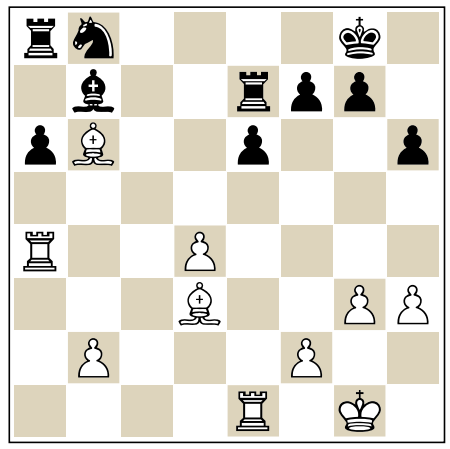
BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

Fabiano Caruana and Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son wish each other luck at the start of the blitz tie-break that decided the 2010 Biel Chess Festival.

27.♗a5 bxa4 28.♖xa4 ♘b8

There was no reason to play this way, when simple measures would have sufficed: 28...♖ee8, or again 28...♘f6 29.♗b4 ♖d7 30.♗c5 ♘d5 31.♖ea1 ♖b8, with equality.

29.♗b6



29...♗c6?!

Black's play is starting to look strange. The c6-square was obviously meant for the knight, which now looks a bit confused on b8.

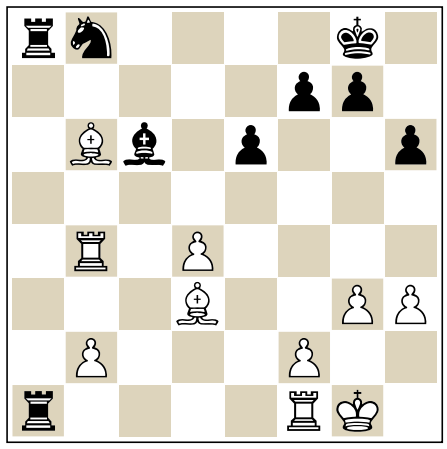
30.♖b4 a5?!

A desperate pawn sacrifice. But Black's position was still not so bad: 30...♗d5 31.♗c5 ♖e8 still holds fairly comfortably.

31.♗xa5 ♖ea7 32.♗b6 ♖a1

Black has activated his pieces, but the price was too high.

33.♖f1



33...♖xf1+?

An illogical move, letting the king escape from its cage. Despite Black's earlier mistakes he still had very good chances to defend.

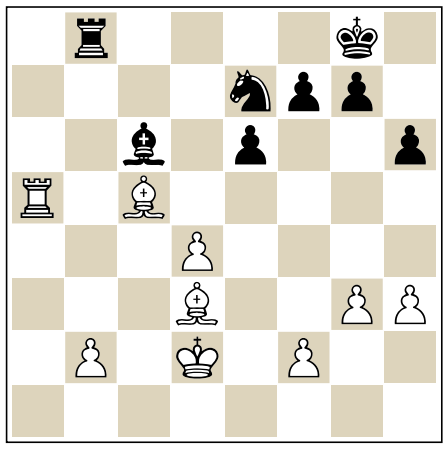
I calculated the following nice line during the game: 33...♗f3 34.♖b3 ♘c6 35.♗c5 ♗d5 36.♖a3 ♖xf1+ (actually, Black still has 36...♖1xa3 37.bxa3 e5!, with good chances to make a draw) 37.♔xf1 ♖b8 38.b4! ♘xb4 39.♗d6 ♖b6 40.♗c7, and White wins.

The computer mentions an inspired defence: 33...♗d5 34.♗c5 ♘c6 35.♖b6 e5!?, with counterplay that might be enough for a draw.

34.♔xf1 ♗f3 35.♔e1 ♘c6 36.♖b5 ♘e7 37.♔d2 ♗c6

37...♘d5 38.♗a7, and White trades rooks with ♖b8 next, with an easily winning game.

38.♖a5 ♖b8 39.♗c5



39...♖xb2+?

Suicide. After 39...♘d5 40.♔c2 Black was also losing, but he could at least have put up a fight.

40.♔c3 ♖xf2

40...♖b7 41.♖a8+ mates.

41.♗xe7 ♖f3 42.♔d2 ♖xg3 43.♖c5 ♗d7 44.♖c7 ♗e8 45.♖c8 f6

Everything wins here, but I like my elegant solution.

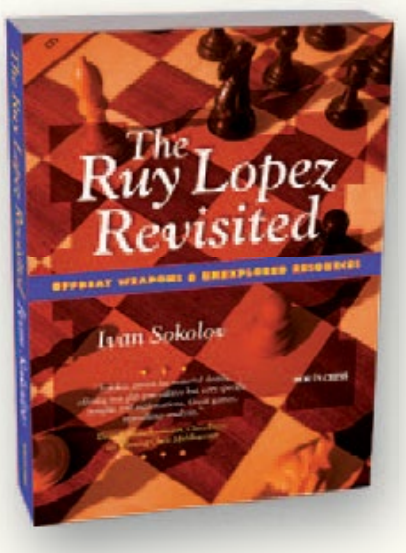
46.♗d6 ♖g2+ 47.♔e3 ♔f7 48.♗h7

Before, I had entombed my knight on this square, now it is the bishop! But now it's a mating net!

48...e5 49.d5 Black resigned.

After this game the momentum in the tournament changed... I was unable to win another game! Luckily, my +2 score was sufficient for shared first, and I prevailed in the tie-breaks.

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave reached the tiebreak thanks to a great fight in the penultimate round against Maxim Rodshtein. His assessment of what happened in the tournament before this game is not devoid of self-criticism. 'At this point I was still in contention for the title, despite a chess level which had just been bad. But luck was on my side: one can only wonder how I got two draws from the two positions I had against Caruana and Giri, especially given the fact that I was probably still in deep trouble the moment Anish offered me a draw. To complete the survey, my first win, in Round 6 against Howell, looks pretty unconvincing, especially given the troubles I could have encountered in the middlegame... So the rest day was very



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welcome, and I probably gained back my strength during the fabulous football tournament, which France somehow managed to win, despite having at least one useless player on the field at any one time: either my coach Arnaud Hauchard or the pretty efficient striker I was. And then I played a pretty good game against Tomashevsky, coming very close to a win but for his tremendous defensive skills.'

Warmed up by this effort he was 'pretty motivated to play my best chess' against Rodshtein.

NEW IN CHESS

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave: 'Playing my pet line against me without thinking for more than a minute can be considered either provocative or reckless ☺.'

NOTES BY

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

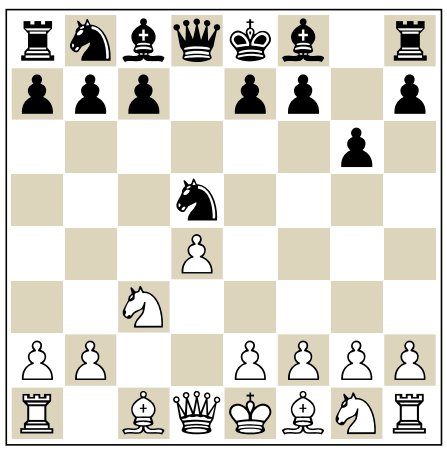
GI 1.15 – D76
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Maxim Rodshtein
Biel 2010 (8)

1.d4! I guess I was bored with getting less than nothing with 1.e4...

1...♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5?!

Playing my pet line against me without thinking for more than a minute can be considered either provocative or reckless ☺. I guess Maxim was feeling pretty confident in his preparations. As a matter of fact, my second Arnaud Hauchard told me that he would probably go for a Slav or something, but I had guessed correctly that he wouldn't change.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5



5.g3

First thing in the morning I had considered some critical lines with 4.♗g5 or the main lines, but somehow Maxim looked prepared for all of it... Then I thought I should use my experience in the Grünfeld and play some shitty move order that he wouldn't know!

Meier played 5.♘f3 ♗g7 6.g3 against me in the World Cup, and this actually was the game that inspired me to use this move order. In this rapid game I had thought for maybe two minutes to find what I regarded as the best continuation: 6...♘xc3! 7.bxc3 b6. A special piece of advice on the Grünfeld is that when you get caught by a move order you must try to find the reaction you like most to get the kind of position you're more familiar with. For instance, in this game I soon gained a considerable edge without doing anything special, even though I then managed to spoil it in good style ☺.

5...♗g7

Now Black thought for some minutes, so I was already feeling very confident on move 6, which certainly doesn't happen too often ☺.

6.♗g2 ♘b6

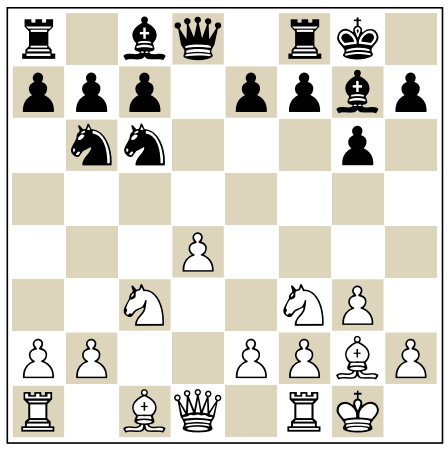
6...♘xc3 is probably the easiest reaction to White's set-up: 7.bxc3 c5 8.♘f3 ♘c6, and Black should be OK, even though there are still some pitfalls. But I had guessed that Maxim would prefer to enter a line he was more familiar with, too.

7.♘f3 0-0?!

Again a small mistake, simply giving me an additional choice to meet Black's set-up.

7...♘c6 8.e3 (8.d5? ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕xd5 is the problem) 8...0-0 9.0-0 was the line I had been preparing for most of the morning...

8.0-0 ♘c6



9.d5!

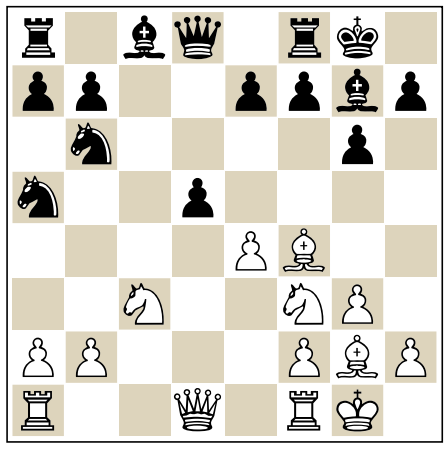
Here I thought for the first time trying to decide whether I should go back to my morning preparation or go straight into some very good preparation by Vlad Tkachiev (probably one of the best players in this variation as White), who had played it one year ago at the French Championship against... well, I bet you have already guessed ☺.

9...♘a5 10.e4 c6 11.♗f4

A rather old line, but Vlad's new treatment looks definitely unpleasant for Black. Now Maxim thought for quite a long time (so that I already was 30 minutes up on the clock).

11...cxd5

11...♘ac4 12.b3! is a classical motif in this line: 12...♗xc3 13.bxc4, with very dangerous play for Black, especially if he takes the exchange.



12.♘xd5!

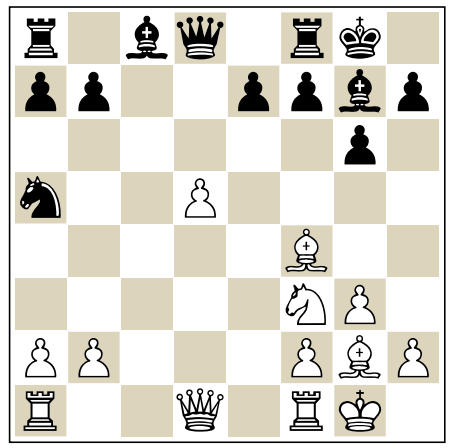
When Vlad played this against me, I was just bewildered at first... until I realized trouble was awaiting me.

12...♘xd5

12...♗xb2 13.♖b1 ♗g7 14.♘c7 ♖b8 15.♕xd8 ♖xd8 16.♘d5 ♖a8 17.♘xe7+ ♔f8 18.♘xc8 ♖axc8 might actually be a decent choice, but not something one would do when confronted with this variation for the first time.

13.exd5

Here, unexpectedly, Black is already in trouble because of the knight on the edge of the board...



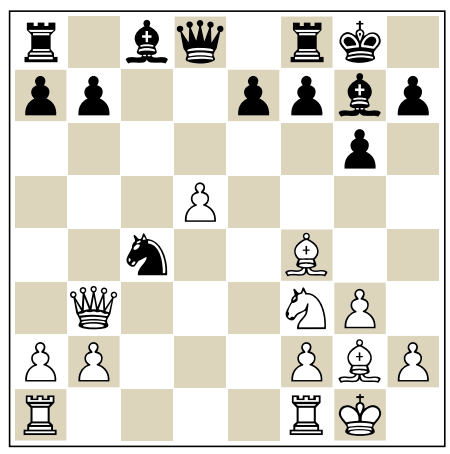
13...♘c4!

The most solid approach, but of course Black will stand slightly worse.

13...♗xb2?! 14.♖b1 ♗f6 15.♖c1! is probably White's main point: force ...b6, then exploit the queenside's weaknesses! A sample variation: 15...b6 16.♗c7 ♕d7 (16...♕e8 17.d6 ♗g4 18.♖e1 ♖c8 19.h3!, and Black is looking cooked) 17.♘e5 ♗xe5 18.♗xe5 ♗b7 19.♖c7 ♕d8 20.♗f4! ♖c8 21.d6 with a clear advantage for White.

13...♗g4 14.♖c1 e5 (my choice against Vlad after thinking for about an hour...) 15.dxe6 ♗xe6, and here 16.♕a4! would have given White a good edge: 16...♘c6 17.b3 h6 18.♖fd1 ♕a5 19.♕xa5 ♘xa5 20.♘d2!, followed by 21.♘e4 and 22.♘c5 or 22.♘d6, with a clearly better endgame due to the more active pieces.

14.♕b3



14...♘d6

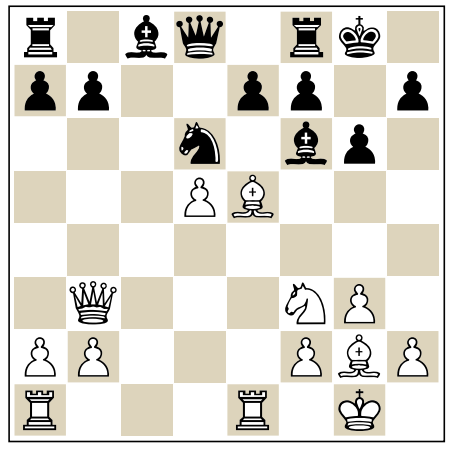
14...♘xb2?! looks too dangerous, and close analysis shows that the knight does get trapped(!): 15.♗e5 ♕b6 16.♗xg7 ♕xb3 17.axb3 ♔xg7 18.♖fe1! (the most important move to find, else Black would be in decent shape) 18...♖d8 19.♘e5 ♗f5 20.♖e2 ♘d3 21.♘xd3 ♗xd3 22.♖xe7 ♗a6 23.♖c7!, with some troubles in the endgame, as Black can't exchange rooks: 23...♖ac8?! 24.d6! ♖xc7 25.dxc7 ♖c8 26.♖c1 b6 (26...♔f8? 27.b4 ♔e7 28.b5) 27.♖a1 ♗b5 28.♖xa7, with a clear pawn up, and a very unpleasant endgame to defend for Black.

15.♖fe1 ♗f6!

Quite a surprising move, but a strong one. Black just threatens to exchange queens with 16...♕b6.

16.♗e5

When I played this move, I had totally missed Black's strong reaction, so I thought my position was much better. But this move should still be the best, as after 16.♗g5 ♗xg5 17.♘xg5 ♗f5 Black looks decent, because White has lost some tempi.



16...♕a5!

Preventing my idea of exchanging the dark-squared bishops and the knights, because now I don't have square d2 for my knight.

After 16...♗g4?! 17.♗xf6 exf6 18.♘d2! was my main idea – once the knights are exchanged the pawn becomes a big threat. Added to the attacking possibilities on the kingside (h4-h5) and the rooks always threatening to enter the seventh rank, this makes Black's position very difficult, and above all without any hope for counterplay.

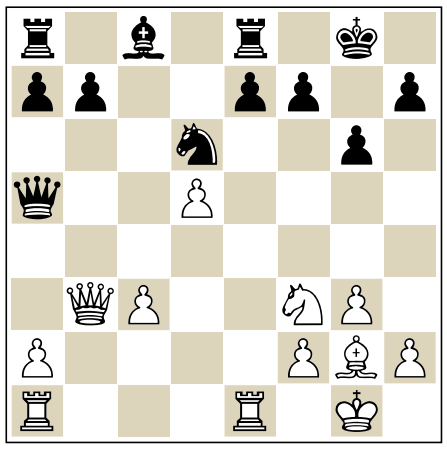
17.♗c3!

Surprisingly, this is probably the

only move to keep a complicated position, and this was exactly to my taste, given the fact that even though both of us were going to be short of time, my position looked easier to handle.

17...♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♖e8

This position is quite difficult to assess. It's clear that I have some attacking chances, but as soon as Black consolidates, my centre pawns will be very weak.



19.c4

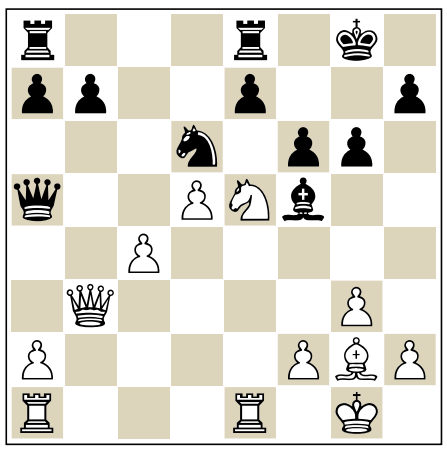
This is a rather risky decision, but it suited my attacking intentions.

19.♘e5! f6 (the ♘e5 is too strong, so this weakening move will be unavoidable) 20.♘c4 ♕c5 21.♘xd6 ♕xd6 was not so much to my taste, playing only for the weakness on e7 – maybe wrongly, as after the simple queenside advance 22.a4 ♗d7 23.c4 b6 24.a5 Black's position still looks difficult.

19...♗f5!

Here Maxim reacted strongly and found all the only moves to stay in the game. For the moment playing ...b6 is impossible, since the knight will immediately come to c6.

20.♘e5 f6



21.g4!

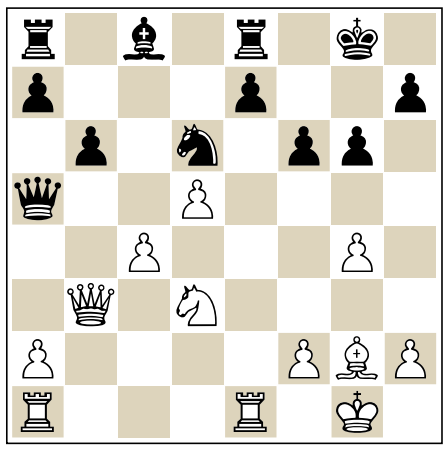
White was already committed to make this move.

21...♗c8

Again the correct decision, but an obvious one, as after 21...fxe5? 22.gxf5 ♘xf5 23.♖xe5, followed by 24.♖ae1 and 25.♗h3, Black's position looks disastrous.

22.♘d3 b6!

Here my position seems hopeless, with weaknesses everywhere, but I had a logical and dangerous follow-up in mind.



23.g5!

From a practical point of view this move looks like a killer, and, unsurprisingly, Maxim fell into deep thought.

23.♘b4? ♗xg4 24.♘c6 ♕c5 looks tame for White.

23.h3 is actually interesting, but not a move I would consider: 23...♗a6 24.♘b4! ♗xc4 25.♕b2 ♗b5 26.a4 ♗d7 27.♘c6, with good play for the pawn but probably no more.

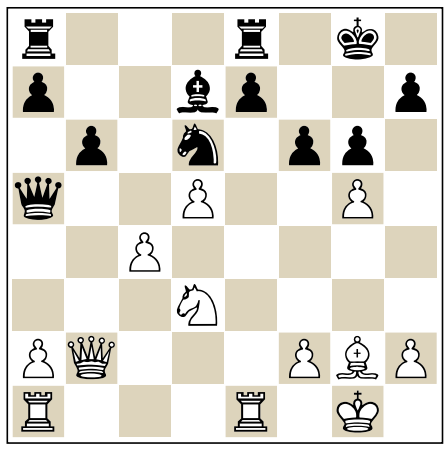
23...♗d7

This is a solid reaction to keep control of the e6-square, but arguably not the best one.

To Maxim's defence, 23...♗a6 24.♕b2! (the strong-looking 24.♘f4? would run into the simple 24...♖ac8! 25.♕h3 ♖xc4 26.♘e6 ♕c3) looked terribly dangerous, but the simple 24...♘xc4 25.♕d4 ♘d6 26.♘b4 ♗b7! should hold without too many problems.

24.♕b2!

It goes without saying that I mustn't relax in this position. Some power play is exactly what the position needs here ☺.

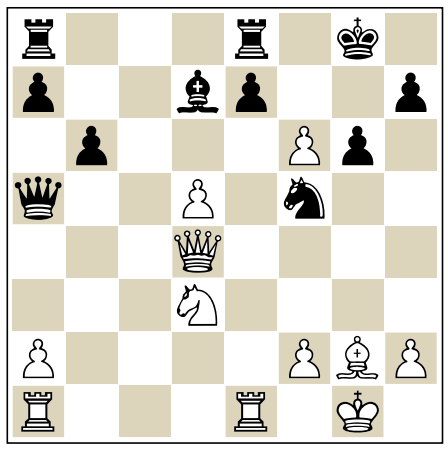


24...fxg5

24...♔f7?? loses to 25.♖xe7+!.

And on 24...♗f5, 25.♘b4! was a strong follow-up: 25...♕c5 26.♘c6 ♘xc4 27.♕c3 fxg5 28.d6! ♘xd6 29.♕xc5 bxc5 30.♘xe7+ ♔f8 31.♘xf5 ♘xf5 32.♗xa8 ♖xa8 33.♖ab1!, with a definitely unpleasant and probably technically lost endgame for Black.

Best was 24...♘xc4! 25.♕d4 ♘d6 26.gxf6 ♘f5!, but apart from being a bit difficult to consider, it looks a bit scary. Still, it's not so clear whether White will have a particularly strong attack:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27.f7+!? (27.♕e5 exf6 28.♕xf6 ♖xe1+ 29.♖xe1 ♖f8 looks OK for Black now) 27...♔xf7 28.♘e5+ ♔g8 29.♕g4 ♖ad8 30.♗e4 ♔g7! 31.♕g5 ♕c3!! 32.♘xd7 ♖xd7 33.♗xf5 ♖xd5 34.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 35.♕xe7+ ♔h6, and Black holds – crazy stuff!

25.♘e5

"I know..."

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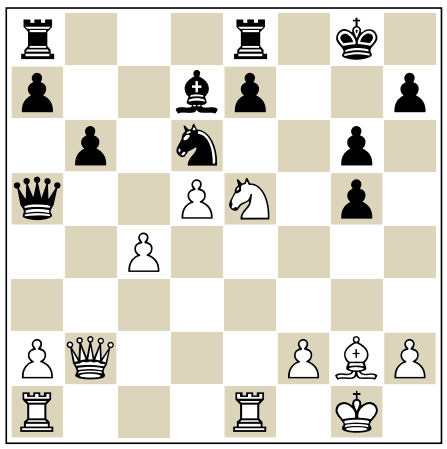


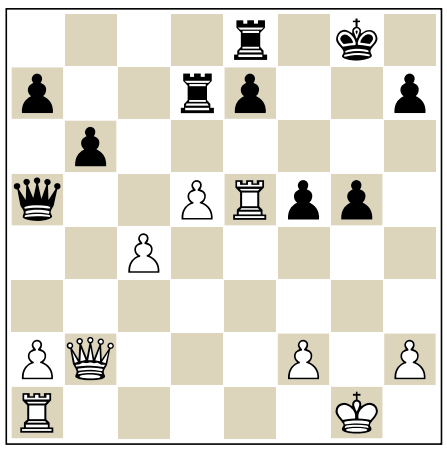
25...♖ad8?

A pleasant surprise. Maxim had to prevent my bishop from coming to the h3-c8 diagonal (especially the e6-square) with 25...♕a4!, and even though the queen's placement looks suspicious, there's no easy way to exploit it: 26.♖ac1 ♖ac8 27.♗f1!, with the idea of playing 28.♖c3 and 29.♖a3, so Black had to answer 27...♘f7! (this idea is certainly not so easy to find!) 28.♖e3 ♘xe5 29.♖a3 ♘xc4 30.♗xc4 ♕xc4 31.♖xc4 ♖xc4 32.♖xa7 ♗h3, with some chances to hold the endgame because of Black's counterplay against the white king.

26.♘xd7 ♖xd7 27.♗h3 ♘f5

27...♖c7 28.♗e6+ ♘f7 29.♖e4 followed by f4 is just painful for Black.

28.♗xf5 gxf5 29.♖e5



Black is still a pawn up, but he has many weaknesses around his king, which are impossible to protect efficiently.

29...♖d6

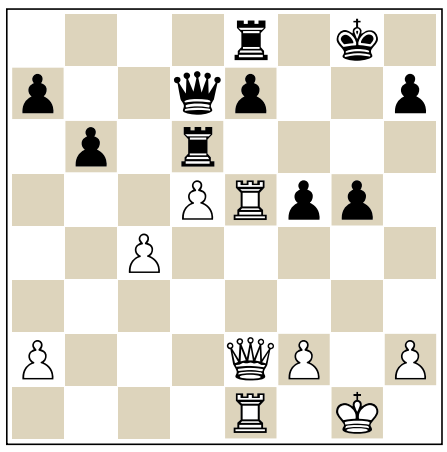
Here 29...♖f8 30.d6 ♕a6! 31.dxe7 ♖e8 32.♖xf5 ♖exe7 33.♕f6 ♕c8! might have been the best defensive try, but this is virtually impossible to find ☺. The idea is 34.♖xg5+ ♖g7 35.♕e6+ ♔h8 36.♖g3?? ♖d1+ and wins.

30.♖ae1 ♕a4! Simply the only move to stay in the game.

31.♕e2

And not 31.♖xe7? ♖xe7 32.♖xe7 ♕d1+.

31...♕d7



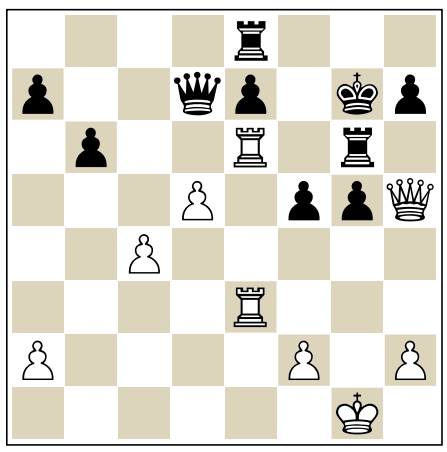
32.♕h5!?

32.♖xe7! ♖xe7 33.♕xe7 f4 34.♖e6! (I had forgotten this simple move) should also give White a winning endgame after 34...♕xe7 35.♖xe7 a6 36.♔g2, and Black will never be able to play ...b5 because of c5-c6-c7!.

32...♖g6 33.♖e6 ♔g7

33...♖g7 runs into 34.d6.

34.♖1e3!



Now it's theoretically over, the immediate threat being 35.♖h3.

34...f4 35.♖h3?!

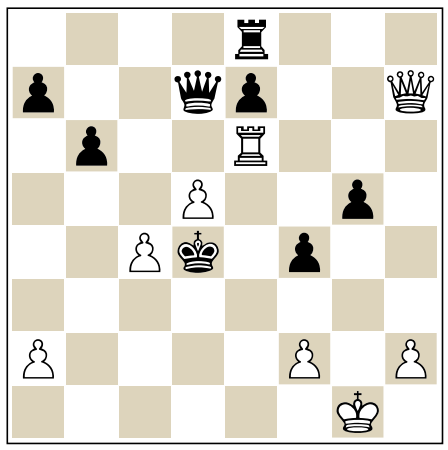
I hesitated with 35.♖3e5! ♖xe6 36.dxe6 ♕d8, but had missed the simple shot 37.♖d5! ♕b8 38.♔f1!, covering checks on the g-file, with a mating attack.

35...♖xe6?

35...♖g8 36.♕xh7+ ♔f8 was already not so easy, even though after 37.♖d3 ♖8g7 38.♕h8+ ♖g8 39.♕h3! Black's position is still on the edge of breaking down.

36.♕xh7+ ♔f6 37.♖h6+ ♔e5 38.♖xe6+ ♔d4

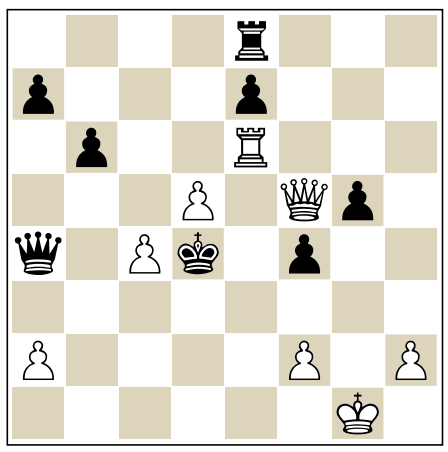
Now the game ought to have been over, but I managed to complicate matters by calculating some stupid line ☺.



39.♕f5?

After 39.♕e4+ ♔c3 40.♕f3+! was the strong blow I had missed: 40...♔xc4 (40...♔b4 41.♖c6!) 41.♖e4+ ♔b5 42.♕d3+ ♔c5 43.♕a3+ and wins.

39...♕a4! If 39...♔c3 40.♖e3+ fxe3 41.♕xd7 e2 42.♕e6 ♔d2 43.♕e3+ ♔d1 44.♕d3+ ♔e1 45.♕c2, and mates.



40.♖e4+

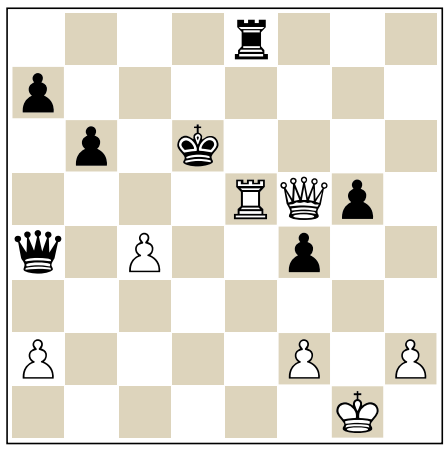
40.♕e5+! ♔xc4 41.♕e2+! was already not so easy to see: 41...♔xd5 42.♕e5+ ♔c4 43.♕e4+ ♔b5 44.♖e5+ and wins.

40...♔c5

Only here did I realize that my planned 41.d6+ would be met by

41...e5, and Black is still alive. So I calculated carefully what would happen and – shame on me for this ☺ – I transposed by force to a winning endgame...

41.d6+ e5 42.♖xe5+ ♔xd6



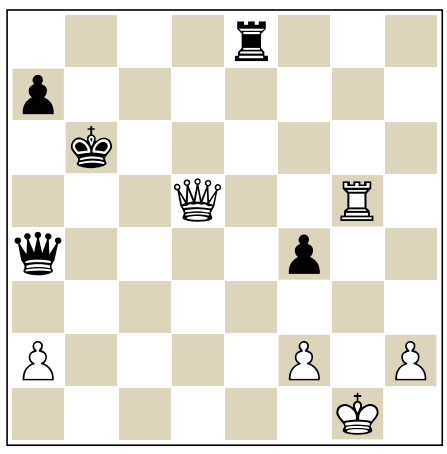
43.c5+! A strong intermediate move. **43...bxc5**

I wonder if Maxim had seen this attempt to improve on the ensuing endgame, but of course it doesn't work at all: 43...♔c7 44.♕f7+ ♔d8 45.♕d5+ ♔c7 46.c6!, and wins.

44.♕f6+ ♔c7 45.♕f7+ ♔d8 46.♕d5+! ♔c7 47.♕xc5+ ♔b7 48.♕d5+! ♔b6

Equally hopeless were 48...♔b8 49.♕b3+! ♕xb3 50.♖xe8+, or 48...♔c7 49.♕f7+ ♔d8 50.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 51.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 52.♔g2, and the endgame wins easily.

49.♖xg5



This was the end of my calculation. Black can't get any counterplay and has to go for a hopeless endgame, which doesn't require much in the way of comments: push the h-pawn, centralize the king and win the weak pawns is more or less the only thing I would need to do.

49...♕c6 50.♕xc6+ ♔xc6 51.h4 f3 52.h5 ♖e4 53.♔h2

53.h6?? ♖h4 is probably the only trap in the position.

53...♖a4 54.♔g3

Black resigned.

This game made me feel better, if only because it proved that I could still play interesting chess.

The early rounds were dominated by Wesley So, who took the lead with wins over Howell and Rodshtein. He was greatly enjoying his stay in Biel, but for some reason he quickly ran out of steam. In Round 5 he lost to Caruana and in Round 9 he went under in a drawish queen ending against Giri. All in all, he felt 50 per cent was a fair result, particularly because he 'played terribly' in various games. What a strong and mature player he is can be gleaned from his win against Rodshtein, which he regarded as his best effort.

NOTES BY

Wesley So

GI 5.7 – D87
Maxim Rodshtein
Wesley So
Biel 2010 (3)

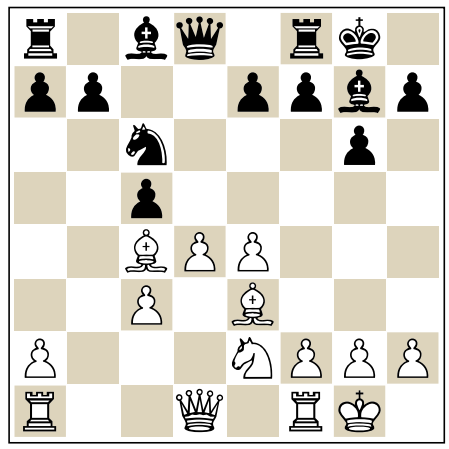
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

While preparing for this game it was not that easy for me to decide which opening to play against Maxim. I first considered the Slav, but then I decided that it was too drawish and that he is too familiar with it. Then I thought about the Nimzo, which I have played for a long time now, but then he would reply with the Catalan, which is quite annoying. The King's Indian also looks quite risky, so I decided on the Grünfeld, especially since I very much wanted to fight in this game.

3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4

This variation came to me as a bit of a surprise. Maxim usually goes for the ♗e3 lines. This 7.♘e2 variation has been popularized by Topalov recently, and I think that due to his successes with it it can safely be called the Topalov Variation.

7...c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.0-0

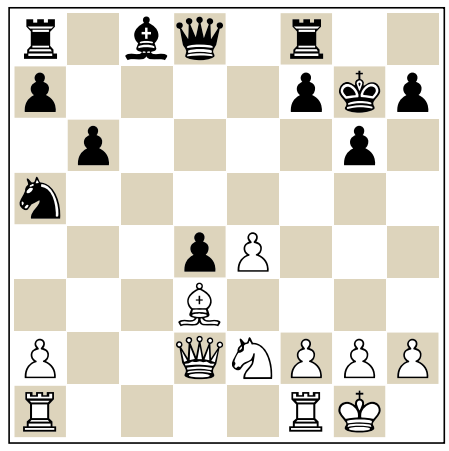


10...♘a5

The main line here is 10...♗g4 11.f3 ♘a5, but actually I find it strange that Black is simply giving up a pawn on f7: 12.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 13.fxg4 ♖xf1+ 14.♔xf1 – although he probably has enough compensation.

Also very popular these days are 10...♕c7 and even 10...b6, as played by Anand against Topalov in their recent world championship match.

11.♗d3 b6 12.♕d2 e5 13.♗h6 cxd4 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.cxd4 exd4



16.f4

BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

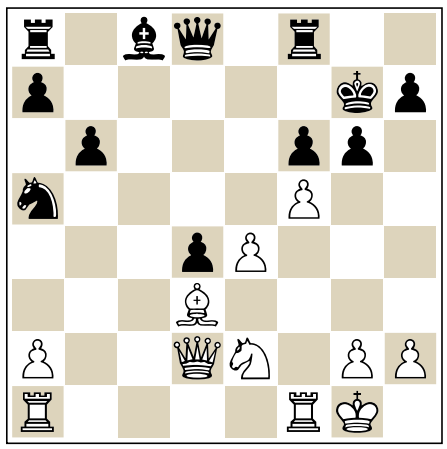
Wesley So: 'I was hoping that my neighbour Truong Son would win the tie-breaks, but this tournament was really for Fabiano.'

In his most recent game in this variation, Topalov played 16.♖ac1!? against Anand, and Black was crushed in just 30 moves. Maybe this is the most dangerous approach for White.

16...f6 17.f5!?

Trying to mate Black without further ado, but it gives away the e5-square for my knight, and with my next move I managed to exploit this and stabilize my position. Of course, White has other possibilities here.

During the game I tried to remember some of my analysis. I think one of the lines I feared was 17.♖ac1 ♗g4 18.♘g3 ♖c8!? 19.f5 ♘c6 20.h3 ♗h5, when the position is extremely complicated, and my bishop looks crazy on h5.



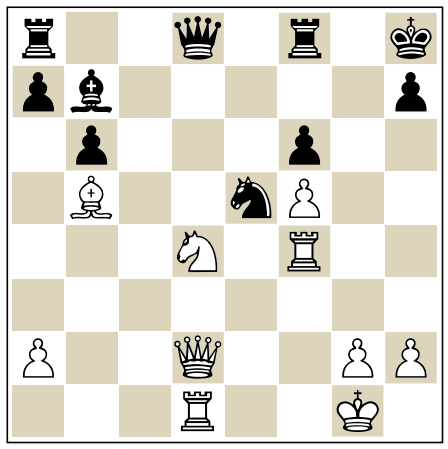
17...♘c6!

I like this move, as after the knight goes to e5 it almost completely stabilizes my position and Black can rely on a solid stand. I remember that after analysing the first match game Topalov-Anand, Sofia 2010, I concluded that this move was definitely the safest one.

18.♗b5 ♘e5 19.♘xd4 gxf5 20.exf5

During the game I also calculated 20.♖ad1 fxe4 21.♕f4 ♕e7 22.♕xe4 ♗b7, when it is likely that Black can survive the complications.

20...♔h8 21.♖ad1 ♗b7 22.♖f4

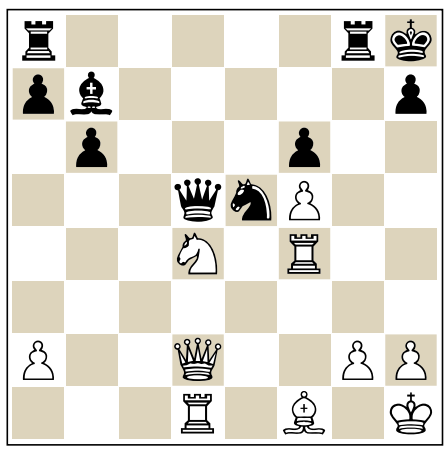


Here my preparation ended. I think Black has the initiative, since his pieces are well coordinated and well positioned. I also pressurize the g2 pawn, and my position does not have any real weaknesses. After the game my opponent admitted that maybe this variation is just not good for White. However, in my next few moves I think I made many inaccuracies.

22...♕d5

I made this obvious move quickly, but later in the game I thought that 22...♖g8 23.♗f1 would have been more accurate, because now Black can transpose with 23...♕d5 or consider 23...♕d6!?, keeping an eye on the f4 rook when the black knight moves, which is also quite important in some lines.

23.♗f1 ♖g8 24.♔h1

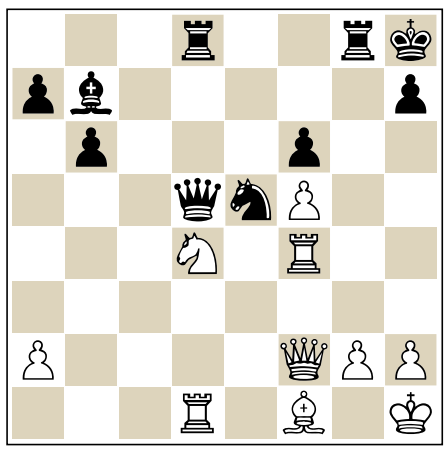


24...♖ad8

This is also a natural move, but

later, when I checked my game with the computer, it immediately suggested 24...♘c4! 25.♗xc4 (on 25.♕f2 ♖ae8! is a very strong move that I had missed. For some reason, I keep trying to make the sacrifice 25...♘e3 work here, although it obviously doesn't. After 25...♖ae8, Black is close to winning, I think) 25...♕xg2+ 26.♕xg2 ♗xg2+ 27.♔g1 ♗d5+ 28.♔f2 ♗xc4 29.♘e6! ♗xa2 30.♖d7 ♗xe6 31.fxe6, and although White may manage to save this position, I believe 24...♘c4 was definitely preferable to the move I played in the game. Unfortunately I always miss something in my games!

25.♕f2



Here I thought my position was definitely preferable. And it probably is, considering that all my opponent's pieces are pinned and I have strong pressure on the g2-square. But while thinking during the game, try as I might, I could not find a good way to increase the pressure! White's next move is obviously ♖d2, after which he can move his knight back. And the longer I thought about the position, the more confused I got! Finally, after thinking for 50 minutes, I decided to just make some move.

25...♖g4

This is probably a weak move, since after the rook swap the pressure on the g2-square will be almost gone. But then, as I told you, I just couldn't find another good move here.

I was also thinking of crazy moves like 25...♖c8, intending to meet 26.♖d2 with 26...♖c1, but then moving the rook to d8 and then back to c8 is illogical. After 26.♕e2 White does not have any problems.

However, now I think that the best continuation for Black would have been 25...♖d7! 26.♖d2 ♕a5, intending to double rooks on the g-file next, when 27.♕e1? would lose immediately to 27...♘d3! 28.♗xd3 ♖xg2.

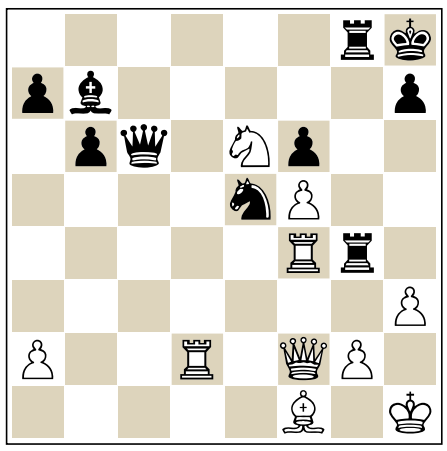
26.♖d2

The alternative is 26.♖xg4 ♘xg4 27.♕h4 ♕e4 28.h3 ♖xd4 29.♖xd4 ♕xd4 30.hxg4 ♔g7, when I thought that I still had some advantage. But after 31.♕g3, when the position is equal, this is just an illusion.

26...♖dg8 27.♘e6

In this position I was still hoping to put some pressure on my opponent, but the position is just equal. A possible way to achieve the draw was 27.♖xg4 ♘xg4 28.♕f4 ♕e4 29.♕xe4 ♗xe4 30.h3 ♘e3 31.♔g1 ♘xf5 32.♘b5.

27...♕c6 28.h3



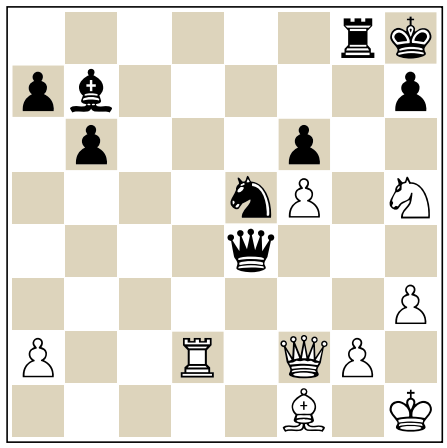
28...♖xf4

I think only the computer could quickly spot opportunities like: 28...♘d3! 29.♖xd3 ♖xg2 30.♗xg2 ♕c1+ 31.♔h2 ♗xg2 32.♕g1 ♕xg1+ 33.♔xg1 ♗e4+ 34.♖g3 ♖xg3+ 35.♔f2 ♖g2+ 36.♔f1 ♗c6 37.♖d4 ♖g8, when White is in for a difficult endgame. This variation did not even cross my mind until later, when I checked some lines with an engine. I think 30...♕c1+ was too deep for me.

29.♘xf4

Now, with stable pieces on f4 and d2, the position is completely level, of course, but around this point I was still feeling a bit ambitious.

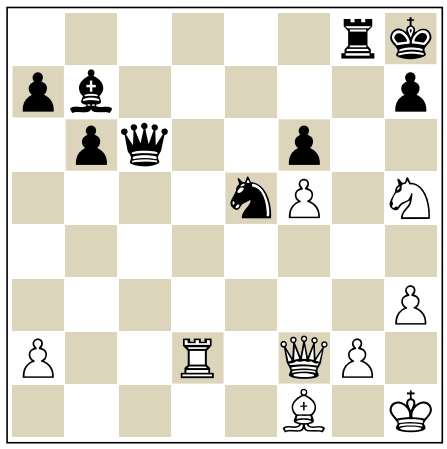
29...♕e4 30.♘h5!



30...♕c6

The queen has to go back in order not to lose immediately.

While calculating 29...♕e4, I intended 30...♘f3? here, but this just loses after 31.♖d7, threatening to take on h7, of course.



31.♔h2

After the game my opponent suggested 31.♕f4, when I intended 31...♕c1 32.♔h2, and now not 32...♘f3+? 33.gxf3 ♕xf1 34.♕d4!, when it is Black who is mated(!), but instead 32...♕c7! 33.♖f2 ♖g5 34.♘xf6 ♖xf5! 35.♕g3 ♘f3+ 36.♖xf3 ♕xg3+ 37.♖xg3 ♖xf6 38.♗c4 ♖g6, when a draw arises. I'm not sure if I would have seen 34.♕d4! (after

Biel 2010 — **cat. XVII**

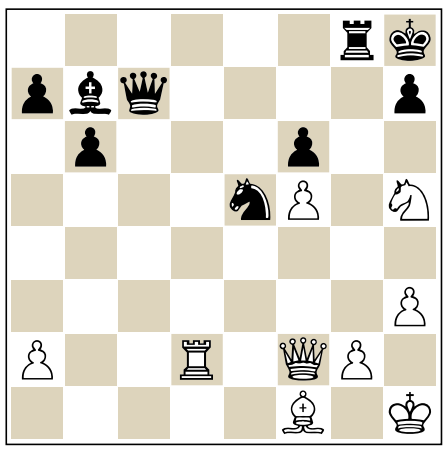
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR
1	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2697	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	5½	2733
2	Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son	IGM	VIE	2617	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	5½	2742
3	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	IGM	FRA	2723	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	5½	2730
4	Dmitry Andreikin	IGM	RUS	2650	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	5	2702
5	Wesley So	IGM	PHI	2674	0	½	½	½	*	½	1	0	1	½	4½	2656
6	Evgeny Tomashevsky	IGM	RUS	2708	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	4½	2652
7	Maxim Rodshtein	IGM	ISR	2609	½	½	0	½	0	½	*	1	½	1	4½	2663
8	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2672	½	0	½	½	1	½	0	*	½	½	4	2613
9	David Howell	IGM	ENG	2616	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	*	1	3½	2582
10	Parimarjan Negi	IGM	IND	2615	0	½	½	½	½	0	0	½	0	*	2½	2496

Play-off

Caruana-Vachier-Lagrave	2-1
Caruana-Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son	1½-½

32...♘f3?+) during the game, but I'm glad he did not go for 31.♕f4!

31...♕c7 32.♔h1 ♕c1 33.♔h2 ♕c7 34.♔h1



34...♕f7!?

I'm not better, of course, but since we were both in extreme time-trouble (he had around two minutes to reach move 40, while I had five), I decided to take a risk, especially since I didn't think I was any worse in this position either.

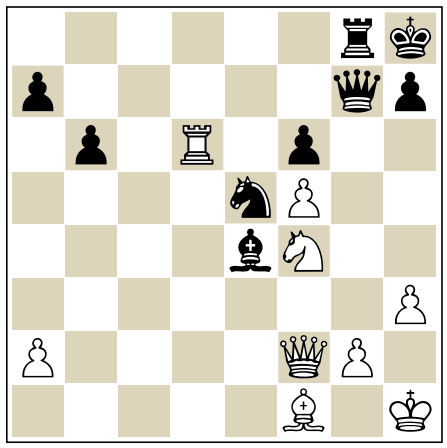
35.♘f4

In case of 35.♕h4 ♘f3! 36.gxf3 ♗xf3+ 37.♗g2 ♗xh5 I just win a pawn for nothing, but amazingly, the computer suggests it is just equal after 38.♖d6 (certainly not 38.♗d5?, which loses elegantly after 38...♕xd5+! 39.♖xd5 ♗f3+ 40.♔h2 ♖g2+ 41.♔h1 ♖g5+! 42.♔h2 ♗xd5, and there is no way to stop 43...♖g2+, which will win the white queen).

35...♗e4 36.♖d6

I thought I still had some chances after 36.♖d4 ♗xf5 37.♘d5 ♖g5 38.♖f4 ♕xd5 39.♖xf5 ♖xf5 40.♕xf5 ♔g7, but White does not have to play 36.♖d4, of course.

36...♕g7

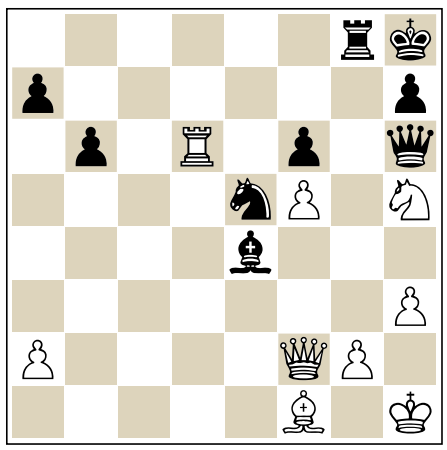


37.♘h5?

The knight has an excellent and stable position on f4, and the only reason my opponent moved it away from there was because of his time-trouble. I think here he had less than a minute for the time-control.

37.♕h4 or even 37.♘g6+ ♘xg6 38.fxg6 ♕xg6 39.♖xf6 were the simplest ways to achieve a draw.

37...♕h6



38.♕h4?

Suddenly White blunders terribly into a mate. This was the move I was secretly hoping he would make after 37.♘h5.

Also lost is 38.♘f4 ♖g4! 39.♖d8+ ♔g7 40.♘e6+ ♔f7 41.♔g1 ♕xh3 42.♖f8+ ♔e7 – this variation I saw when he played 37.♘h5.

White could have played on with 38.♕f4 ♗xg2+ 39.♗xg2 ♕xh5 40.♖xf6, but after 40...♘d3 41.♕e3 ♕d1+ 42.♔h2 ♕c2 he has to find 43.♖g6! ♕c7+ 44.♖g3, with good drawing chances.

38...♗xg2+ 39.♗xg2 ♕c1+

It is mate after 40.♔h2 ♘f3+, so he resigned just before the time-control.

This was probably my last good game in the tournament, as in the next round I got nothing concrete out of the opening with white against Negi, and in Round 5 I had a good position against Caruana that I spoiled with a lot of mistakes. And this is how it went in most of my games until the end of the tournament.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Fabiano Caruana for achieving a very convincing win in Biel! I was hoping that my neighbour Truong Son would win the tie-breaks, but this tournament was really for Fabiano.

ROWSON'S REVIEWS

B-Tournaments and Bermuda Parties

Chess Olympiads are the crucible where FIDE's motto *Gens Una Sumus* feels less like a political aspiration and more like a personal experience. The pieces move in the same way and your games and results still matter, but you are aware of being part of something much larger than yourself. The emotional architecture differs significantly from regular tournaments because you are not autonomous, and your experience is influenced by the dynamics of your team and the authority of your captain; the proximity of your hotel to the venue and the main social scene; the views of your federation and audience back home; and, of course, the B-tournament and the Bermuda party.

For those not familiar with these last two elements, the Bermuda party is an Olympiad institution where chess loving Bermudans generously redistribute some of their tax resistant wealth by welcoming hundreds of participants at a choice venue. The hosts are invariably clad in Bermuda shorts and dinner jackets, which amused me at my first Olympiad in 1996, but feels increasingly wearisome with the passing years (sorry Nigel). The party is a focal point of the Olympiad's social life, and the epicentre of the so called 'B-tournament', where numerous international liaisons begin with flirting over Bermuda cocktails, or promising counterplay on the dance floor. Many such encounters have created rewarding unions, both fleeting and enduring, but I fear many others have succumbed to the tyranny of geographical distance and the tortured phone calls that fail to bridge it.

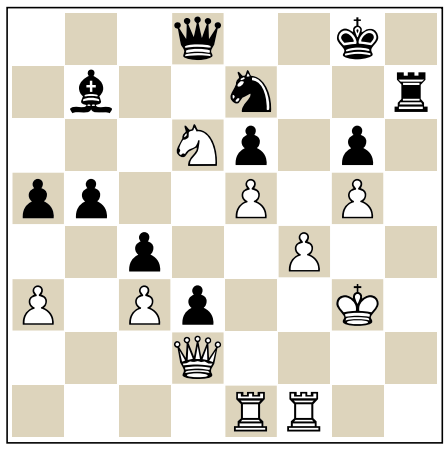
You might feel that any mention of the B-tournament is inappropriate in a serious chess magazine, but the social and emotional side of the chess world, with its enormous freedom and international flavour, is a huge part of why people continue to live chess lifestyles. Indeed for me, an awareness of the B-tournament was usually a key component of the Olympiad experience, because even if you are not playing, it gives you something to talk about. I have even heard rumours of a mysterious C-tournament, but I have yet to discover the rules of that game...

I have played in six Olympiads now, but the Scottish team always seem to be sequestered in a hotel that is out of range of what I perceive to be the main social action, and I always seem to arrive at the Olympiad in the middle of some major life event, or just after it, and tend to feel like I should be somewhere else. Such a state of mind never helps, because the core element of competitive 'form', I believe, is presence. And some gratitude helps too. If you want to know who is going to play well at the start of an event, ask yourself who looks like they most want to be there.

I'll remember Yerevan 1996 for an eventful B-tournament but a painful Bermuda party, in which a Norwegian belle I had been patiently courting suddenly succumbed to some bolder moves from an Irish Literati on a crowded dance floor.

I also remember seeing Kasparov for the first time, and feeling swept up, as if by a tidal wave, as I observed his determined march to his board. Yerevan 1996 also featured the genesis of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, and I recall our squad visiting his office, guarded by men with guns and half smiles. Like everyone else, we each received his goody-bag of trinkets, including caviar and a Kirsan comic. I recently threw out my Kirsan vodka, predicting, I hope rightly, that I would never feel desperate enough to drink it.

My first major Olympiad win was the following, which helped Scotland beat much higher seeds, Slovakia – the kind of nugget of meaning that makes success at Olympiads doubly rewarding.



Tibensky-Rowson
Yerevan Olympiad 1996
position after 40...♘e7

My last move of the time control, ♘d5-e7 creates an unusual threat that is hard to stop, but my opponent obviously didn't see it, because he made it even stronger: **41. ♖f2?? ♕xd6!** And White had no choice but to resign, because if he takes, then 42...♘f5+ leads to mate.

In 1998, the Olympiad was in Elista, and our team were not offered meaningful financial support, so I decided to stick with my studies at Oxford, but Istanbul 2000 promised to be a great event. I looked forward to visiting a fascinating city, and I was now a professional Grandmaster who had prepared quite thoroughly. Alas, it turned out to be a rather miserable experience, where I scored minus five, and I don't even remember the Bermuda party!

My Grünfeld preparation gave me good positions as Black against Kozul, Nikolic and Kasimdzhanov, but in each case I failed to capitalise, and gradually lost. Redeeming features of the event were reading Carl Jung's celebrated autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, and having tea with teammate John Shaw on one of the non-playing days, overlooking the Bosphorus at the intersection of Europe and Asia. Scotland also made perhaps our best ever result, finishing 30th, but I think that just heightened my sense of alienation.

In 2002, I was a masters student at Harvard, and arrived in Bled, Slovenia, just in time to get outplayed by Granda Zuniga in Round 7. My chess was again below par, but I will remember Bled 2002 for personal reasons relating to the B-tournament. I was twenty-five, suspended between freedom and commitment in every aspect of my life, and not yet mature enough to see how the former could be achieved through the latter. A serious relationship at home had been in limbo for almost a year, while a tournament liaison from a few months previously looked like it might reignite. Meanwhile, a tentative romance had just begun at what I hoped might be a new life in America, and to complicate matters further, my first serious girlfriend from Slovenia came to visit, stirring old memories. Far from feeling exhilarated, I felt emotionally saturated and confused to the core, not knowing what, who or where I wanted to be. The Bled Bermuda party highlighted this sense of dislocation because the large room was full of noise and colour but devoid of intimacy. Initially I pretended everything was normal, but the smiling faces around me began to feel distant, and the chess-related small talk became nauseating. I sought out the relative solace of a cubicle in the men's room, where I sat down and wept.

A few days later, after losing from a very promising position against Bologan, I emailed a half-baked essay on the role of unconscious perception in education back to Harvard, before going to the nearby bar, which was a genuine hub for that particular Olympiad. Within minutes, I was subjected to intense and suspicious flirtation by an attractive member of a female team from northern Europe. I managed to avoid further complicating my life, and later discovered that there was some sort of girly contest going on to see who could kiss the highest rated player on the premises. I was rated 2547 at the time, and probably considered a good warm up. ('She looked me over and I guess she thought I was alright. Alright in a sort of a limited way for an off night' – Paul Simon.) A few hours later I noticed a similar strategy being employed with Ponomariov, which, if successful, was probably decisive, given that he was 2743 at the time.

Calvia 2004 featured ubiquitous bottles of water, getting crushed by Radjabov in a Najdorf Poisoned Pawn, and the delight of reading William James' *On the Varieties of Religious Experience* in a tourist resort that was otherwise a cultural desert. I met Anand for the first time, between moves while playing Beliavsky on the main stage. I had recently featured in a New In Chess questionnaire, stating various preferences, so Vishy's opening gambit was: 'Anybody who likes South Indian curries can't be that bad.' That year my personal life had settled down, and although the Bermuda party created a few close encounters on the dance floor, I was happy to stay out of the B-tournament.

By the time of Turin 2006, I was married, and didn't even think about the B-tournament. In fact, that year I decided not to go to the Bermuda party, an event that later became infamous, as the site where a disgruntled English Grandmaster punched an Armenian superstar regarding a glamorous Dutch Filipino girl representing Australia. More generally, I found Turin 2006 fairly unpleasant, perhaps because I didn't like the inhuman scale of the Olympic village accommodation, I fell sick, and because Kirsan was reelected. But in Italy the coffee is always good, and I remember the mornings were always bright and vivifying.

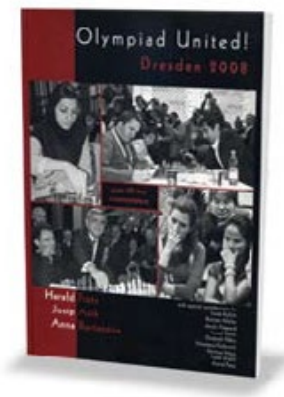
Which brings me to Dresden 2008, a wonderfully organised event in a stunningly beautiful city. This time I had just submitted my doctoral thesis, and my wife was pregnant, so my mind was not completely focussed by any means. I did what I could to feel like a chess player again, solving puzzles and preparing openings, but it takes time. Extended absence from chess does not undermine your sense of where the pieces should go, but it does make your concentration a little shallower, and your willpower a little weaker. If you are going to be a serious Grandmaster, it is very important that the

chess board feels like your natural habitat, the place where you belong, and it is not easy to pull that confidence trick when there are other important things going on in your life.

That said, although my play was patchy, it was the first Olympiad I can honestly say that I really enjoyed and felt privileged to be a part of. The Dresden 2008 Olympiad featured 154 nations and 2169 official participants, including 1270 players, almost half (548) of whom were women, which, as indicated above, is a key component of the Olympiad vibe, if only because men tend to behave much better when surrounded by civilising forces. That year I had a few lively conversations at the Bermuda party, and was just drunk enough to be happy to leave around midnight. However, by then I was thirty-one, and no longer felt like I was 'in the loop' about the B-tournament at all.

Olympiad United! Dresden 2008 by Harald Fietz, Josip Asik and Anna Burtasova is a commendable effort to capture the rich experience of an Olympiad on and off the board. The beautifully produced hardback weighs in at over 300 pages, and those pages include games annotated by Grandmasters, extended interviews, behind the scenes coverage of select players, and excellent black and white photographs, which the authors explain as follows:

'Chess is a sport, an art, a science and much more. But it is a silent, introverted affair – far less visual than other sports. Recently, efforts have been made to change the public image of our royal game. Colour photos dominate our daily life and chess publications have increasingly followed the fashion. But we are not part of that trend! We believe in the contemplative expression of black-and-white print. "If you're photographing in colour you show the colour of their clothes – if you



Olympiad United!
Harald Fietz, Josip Asik, Anna Burtasova

use black and white, you will show the colour of their soul", is the famous view of Canadian veteran photographer Ted Grant.'

I have a weakness for quotations, so when reading through I was also struck by the following comment by writer Patrick Süskind after receiving an invitation to participate against world champion Vladimir Kramnik at the Mainz Chess Classic in 2001:

'More than 20 years ago I played my last chess game (and lost) and during this game I experienced what has kept me away from the board ever since: rapid heartbeat, bouts of sweating and panic attacks. I believe the game is more thrilling and dangerous than boxing, Formula 1 or bullfighting, but I'm no longer willing to put my health at risk for such a hazardous pursuit.'

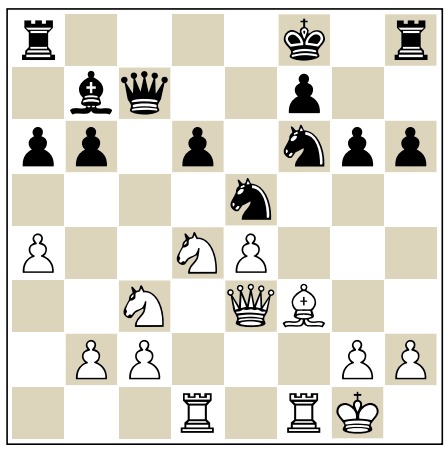
The book has an extended section on the role of 'team spirit' and how it is created and destroyed. There can be no reliable formula on such matters, because it ultimately depends on human chemistry, but it appears there are certain rules of thumb on how to morph individual chess egos into a cohesive whole for the duration of a tournament. I won't give them away here, but their importance is underscored by the following line of Boris Spassky during the press conference:

'The team is not a team. It is just a collection of strong players. Russia's poor result is quite natural to me.'

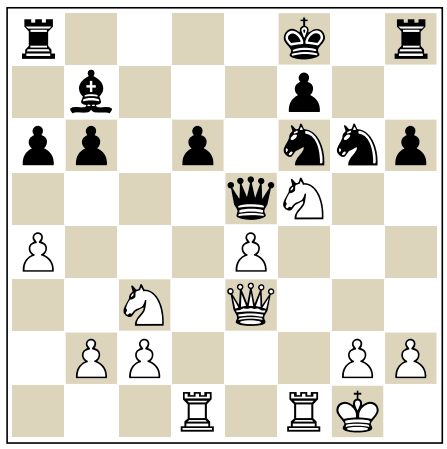
Armenia won again, and many attribute their success to team spirit. However, skill, preparation and massive home support, not least from the President of their country, also played a part in powerful games like the following (my notes):

SI 23.1 – B90
Vladimir Akopian
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Dresden 38th Olympiad 2008

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e6 7.♗e2 ♕c7 8.a4 b6 9.f4 ♗b7 10.♗f3 ♘bd7 11.♕e2 g6 12.0-0 e5 12...♗g7 13.e5 is dangerous. **13.♖ad1!** A strong novelty. **13...♗e7** 13...♗g7 14.♘db5! and 13...exd4 14.♗xd4 are both raging. **14.fxe5 ♘xe5** 14...dxe5 was better, but 15.♘d5! ♘xd5 16.exd5 0-0 17.♘c6 keeps an edge. **15.♗h6! ♗f8 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 17.♕e3! h6?!**



18.♗h5!! A stunning idea – banging into the wall with a view to breaking it down. **18...♕e7** 18...♔g7 19.♗xg6! ♘xg6 20.♘f5+ ♔g8 21.♘xd6. **19.♗xg6! ♘xg6** 19...fxg6 20.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 21.♖f1. **20.♘f5 ♕e5**



21.♕xb6 ♗xe4 22.♕xd6+ ♕xd6

23.♘xd6 ♗xc2 24.♖xf6! ♖a7 24...♗xd1 25.♖xf7+ ♔g8 26.♘d5 and mates. **25.♖d2 ♔g7 26.♖f3!** Black resigned. After 26...♗b3 27.♘f5+ ♔h7 28.♖h3 Black is helpless.

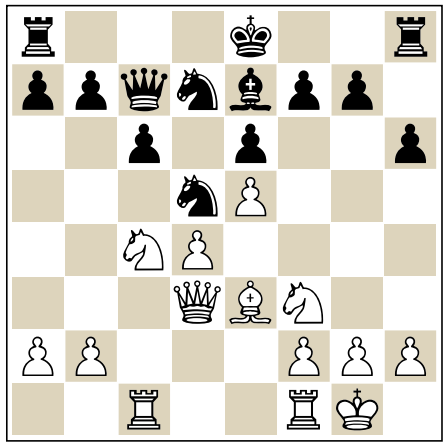
Perhaps the greatest value of the book is that it does not merely focus on the superstars, and gives ample attention to the joys and sorrows of the teams where many of the players don't yet have ratings. I also like the attention given to 'middleweight' players like myself and Sulskis, who annotated the following instructive game, from the match Lithuania-Israel, in a section on the role of team captains:

'As I was due to play White against Postny, I had been gently yet authoritatively advised by the captain not to waste this opening advantage, since two of my team mates were not only giving colour odds, but also a ton of Elo points as well. Skilfully playing on feelings of self-regard, Vaidas (Sakalauskas) described me as an outstanding attacking player, very dangerous as White for any player in the world.'

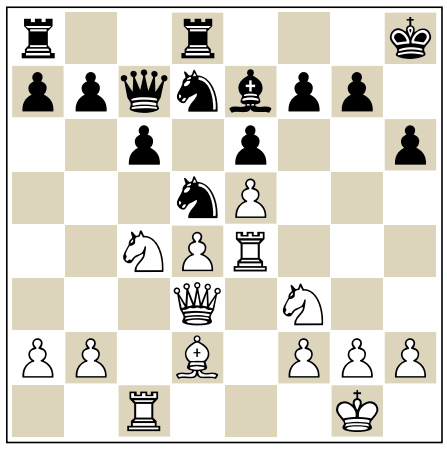
The game shows the role of such inspiration, and why his captain's faith in his abilities was entirely justified (notes are my own, based on Sulskis's much more extended annotations in the book):

CK 4.2 – B12
Sarunas Sulskis
Evgeny Postny
Dresden 38th Olympiad 2008

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♗e3 e6 5.♘d2 ♘d7 6.♗e2 ♕c7 7.♘gf3 ♘e7 8.0-0 h6 There is not much point in the queen being on c7 if Black doesn't play ...f6. Moreover, later in the game Black misses the queen's control of h4 in particular. **9.♖c1! ♗h7 10.c4 dxc4 11.♘xc4 ♘d5 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♗e7** 13...♘xe3 may be necessary here: 14.fxe3 ♗e7 feels a bit better for White, but Black is not getting mated any time soon.

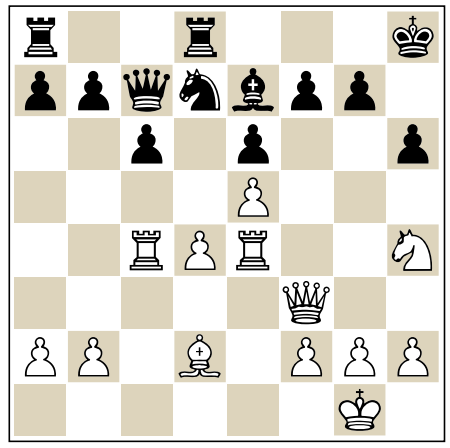


14.♗d2! Sulskis rightly keeps the bishop, which targets h6.
14...0-0 15.♖fe1 Intending the strong manoeuvre ♖e4-g4. Black's position is already critical, because although he is solid in the centre, he is extremely vulnerable on the kingside.
15...♖fd8 15...c5 16.♖e4 cxd4 17.♖g4, and White appears to be better in all lines according to Sulskis.
16.♖e4 ♔h8



17.♘h4! 'The last strategic link is included in the chain. This move required enormous determination from me, since I felt if it didn't work out, my centre would crash. But it had its appeal. Firstly, it makes both the ♕d3-h3 and ♕d3-f3-h5 trails accessible to my queen, from where it will hit hard on the exposed f7 and h6 targets. Secondly, the knight assumes its role in the attack too, especially if a disturbed f7 pawn shivers.'
17...♘5b6 17...c5 18.♕f3 cxd4 19.♕xf7 ♘c5 20.♗xh6 ♗f8 21.♗xg7+ ♗xg7 22.♘g6+ ♔h7 23.♖h4 mate, is one of many lines given by Sulskis.

18.♕f3 ♘xc4 19.♖xc4 19.♕xf7!? ♘xd2 (19...♘dxe5! 20.dxe5 ♘xd2 21.♖g4 ♗d6 22.♕xe6 ♗f8) 20.♖g4 ♗g5 21.♖xg5 hxg5 22.♘g6+ ♔h7 23.♘e7 – 'Winning Gloriously'.



19...♖f8? 19...♘xe5 20.♖xe5 (or 20.♕g3 ♘xc4 21.♕xc7 ♘xd2 22.♖e2 ♗xh4 23.♖xd2 – 'But Black can reach move forty in this kind of position') 20...♗xh4 21.♖h5 ♕e7 22.♕h3 ♗f6 23.♗xh6 gxh6 (23...♔g8 24.♗g5 g6 25.♖h8+) 24.♖xh6+ ♔g8 25.d5! – 'What a powerful move to get in' – 25...♖xd5 26.♖g4+ ♖g5 27.♖xg5+ ♗xg5 28.♖h8+ ♔g7 29.♖xa8 wins.
20.♕h5 ♔h7 21.♖g4 g5 22.♖xg5! ♗xg5 23.♗xg5 ♕a5 24.♖c3 ♕a4 25.♖g3 Black resigned.
'I received a firm handshake and a warm embrace from our captain. As he had promised in case of my win, Vaidas gave me a rest day in Round 4 as a kind-hearted gift for service rendered to our nation. In the end we drew the match with Israel 2-2.'

To really enjoy Olympiads, it helps to play games like this one, or at least to be part of a team that has a chance to do so. If you have been so lucky, *Olympiad United*! will be a reminder of why being part of Olympiads can be such a privilege despite not always being easy. If you haven't ever played in an Olympiad, the book offers a rare glimpse into why you should get working on your game to make it happen, and if that seems too ambitious, reading through this book is the next best thing.

Hallucinating in Philly

(and it wasn't even Philly)

In our previous issue you could read how our roving reporter crowned his recent efforts on the American circuit by claiming first place at the Chicago Open. Following an interlude filled with a number of commitments in the Old World, **Loek van Wely** crossed the ocean again to try his luck at the World Open. This traditional open is usually held in Philadelphia around the 4th of July, but this time the players found themselves in Valley Forge, some 20 miles from downtown Philly. And there was more that wasn't what it seemed...

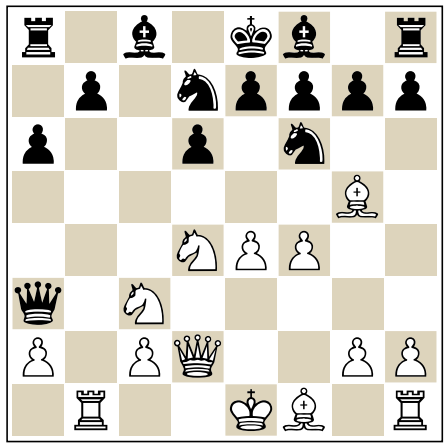
And so after the Chicago Open I went back home. Not that I was taking a break! There was the French League, the Dutch championships, the German team blitz championship, and even chess-table-tennis and chess-soccer tournaments that had to be played! In my absence the die-hards continued their tour of the USA, travelling between the Copper State in Arizona, the National Open in Las Vegas, the New York International and the Philadelphia International. Sadly for them, the notorious and dreaded New In Chess reporter wasn't there, so no real laurels could be won by the heroes. On the other hand, they could happily make blunders in peace without any fear of repercussions ☺.

We met again at the World Open, where upon my arrival I spotted many of the same familiar faces. But some of the faces were new, or were they? At some point I saw a guy who looked eerily similar to Georgian grandmaster Pantsulaia, but I couldn't be sure. So I had a look at the game this guy was playing and told myself, nah, this can't be him. Then the next day I saw another guy who looked pretty much like Czech grandmaster Viktor Laznicka. This time I didn't even bother to check out his game and told myself I must be hallucinating again...

After four rounds the smoke had cleared somewhat on the battlefield, as the seven- and the five-day schedules had merged. Now guess who was sitting there on Board 1 with a score of 4 out of 4? Viktor Laznicka's look-alike! His presence must also have come as a shock and a hallucinatory blow to his next two opponents, because both Alex Lenderman and Surya Shekhar Ganguly played terribly in the opening and gave Viktor an easy time. This took him to 6 out of 6 with three rounds to go and a very comfortable one-point lead over his nearest rivals. Perhaps the most crucial game of the tournament was played in Round 2, when Laznicka faced the winner of the Philadelphia International.

SI 4.1 – B94
Bryan Smith
Viktor Laznicka
Philadelphia 2010 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 ♘bd7 7.f4 ♕b6 8.♕d2 ♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3



10.♗xf6!?

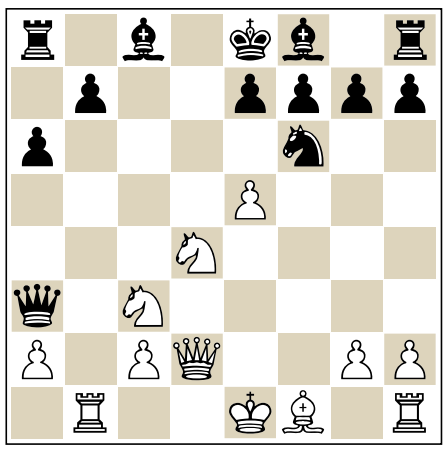
An interesting attempt to improve on the line 10.♗e2?!, which led to a win for Black after 10...g6 11.♗xf6

Thanks to an impetuous start Viktor Laznicka won the 2010 World Open. At the request of the author this photo was taken neither in Philadelphia nor at the World Open.

JAN RASCH

♘xf6 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♗h6! 14.♕d3 ♘g4 15.e6 ♘e3 16.exf7+ ♔xf7 17.♖b3 ♕c5 18.♖f1+ ♔g7 19.♘e4 ♕a5+ 20.c3 ♖d8 in Fernandez-Van Wely, Las Vegas 2009.

10...♘xf6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5



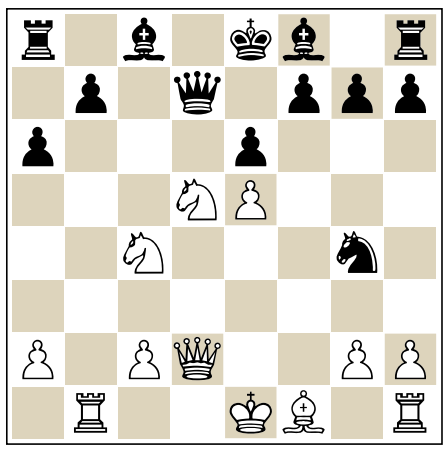
12...♘g4

Bad is 12...♘d7? 13.♘d5 ♕c5 14.♘b3 ♕c6 15.♘a5 ♕c5 16.♘xb7, and Black is lost.

13.♘d5 ♕c5 14.♘b3 ♕c6 15.♘a5

Interesting was 15.♕a5!?, when after 15...b6 16.♘d4 bxa5 17.♘xc6 e6 18.♘c7+ ♔d7 19.♘xa8 ♔xc6 20.♖b6+ ♔c5 21.♗xa6 ♗d7 22.0-0 ♘xe5 23.♖b8 g6 things still don't look so clear to me.

15...♕d7 16.♘c4 e6

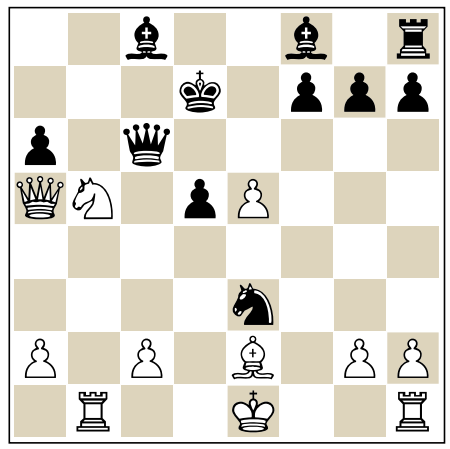


17.♘cb6?

This is a mistake. White would have a pleasant initiative for the pawn after 17.♘db6 ♕xd2+ 18.♔xd2 ♖b8 19.♗e2 ♘f2 20.♖hf1 ♘e4+ 21.♔d3 ♘c5+ 22.♔d4.

But best was 17.♘d6+!? ♗xd6 18.♘b6 ♕c6 19.exd6 ♖b8 20.♗e2 ♘f6 21.0-0 ♘d7 (21...0-0 invites 22.♖xf6 gxf6 23.♖b3 ♕c5+ 24.♔f1, and Black is in trouble) 22.♗f3 ♕c5+ 23.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 24.♔xf2, with nice positional pressure.

17...♕c6 18.♘xa8 exd5 19.♗e2 b5 20.♕a5 ♘e3 21.♘c7+ ♔d7 22.♘xb5



22...♗c5

Not such a bad move, but really

Bryan Smith, winner of the Philadelphia International, was close to upsetting the later winner of the World Open, when he stumbled on the notorious 41st move.

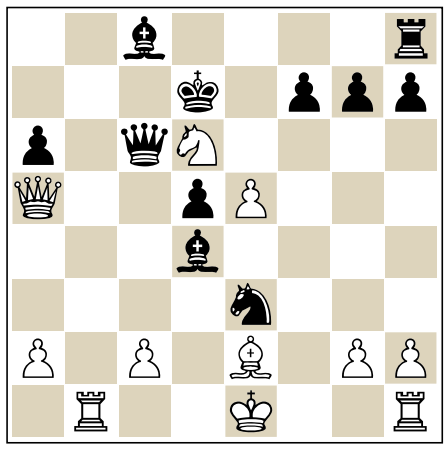
good would have been 22...♕c5! 23.♕a4 axb5 24.♖xb5, when things look scary for Black, but 24...♕a3! seems to kill all the white threats.

23.♘d6

Now the fun starts!

23...♗d4

23...♗xd6 24.exd6 ♕xd6 was not so clear, but I prefer White.



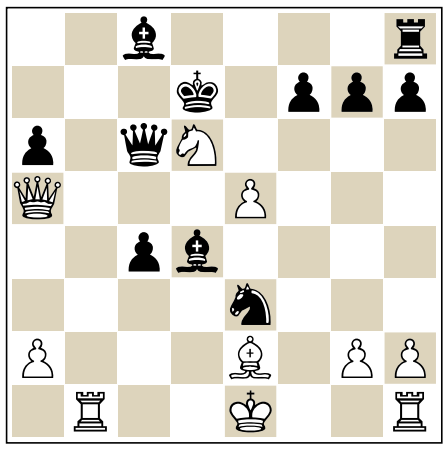
24.c4?

The second-best move. The best one was 24.♖b3!.

24...dxc4?

Not the best either.

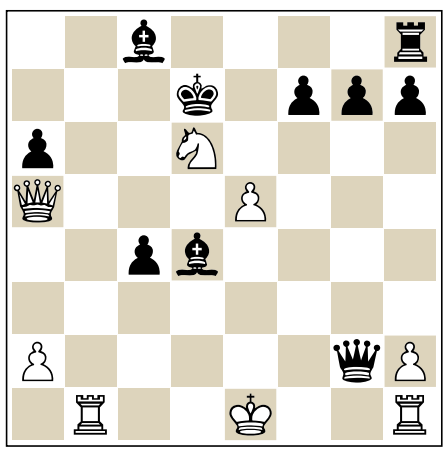
Black would have been clearly on top after 24...♗xe5! 25.♘xf7 ♘xg2+ 26.♔d1 ♘e3+ 27.♔e1 ♗c7.



25.♗f3

If at this point White had played the amazing 25.♔d2!! instantly, Black would have had the right to ask for a strip search ☺.

25...♘xg2+ 26.♗xg2 ♕xg2



27.♖f1?

White still could have made a draw with 27.♕a4+! ♔e7 28.♘f5+!! ♔d8 (28...♗xf5 runs into the killing 29.♕b4+) 29.♕a5+, with move repetition.

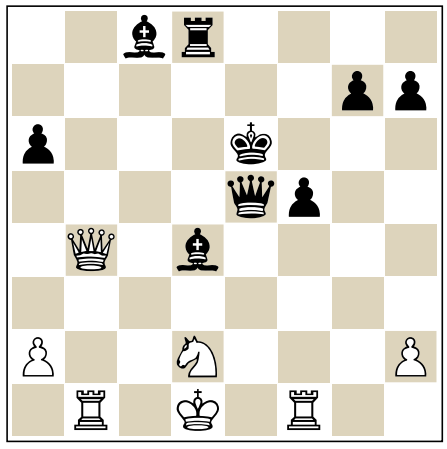
27...♔e6?

The decisive 27...♕c2 wasn't that difficult to find; there is only one check on f7...

28.♕b4 ♕d5 29.♘xc4 29.♕xc4 had to be played. **29...♖d8 30.♘d2 ♕xe5+ 31.♔d1 f5**

It is hard to understand what this move is doing, apart from the fact that White's next move is easy, logical and strong.

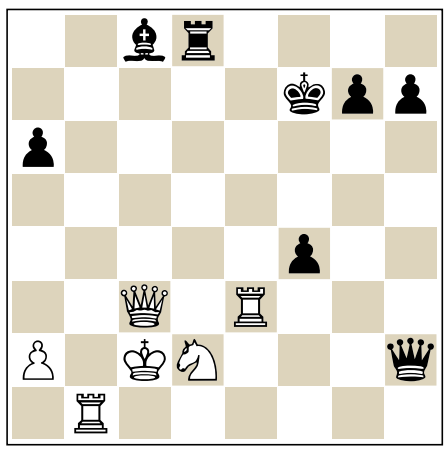
With 31...♕d5 Black would have stayed in control.



32.♖e1 ♗e3 33.♕b3+ ♔f6 34.♖xe3

I think I would have preferred 34.♕xe3, but anyway, a piece is a piece and Black's king is even more vulnerable than White's.

34...♕xh2 35.♕c3+ ♔f7 36.♕b3+ ♔f6 37.♕c3+ ♔f7 38.♔c2 f4



39.♖f3??

I guess White was in serious time-trouble, but still...

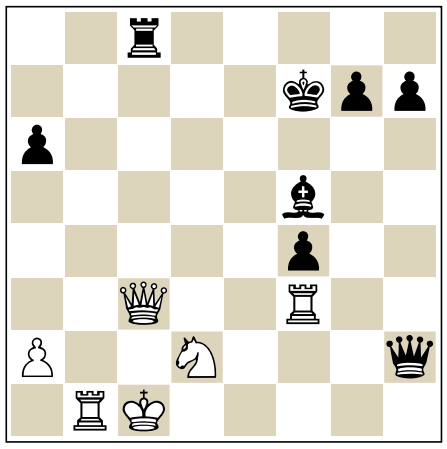
After 39.♕c7+ ♖d7 40.♕c4+ ♔g6 41.♕e6+ the black king will soon be mated.

39...♗f5+ 40.♔c1 ♖c8??

A big blunder on move 40.

White still would have had some chances after 40...♕xd2+ 41.♕xd2 ♖xd2 42.♔xd2 ♗xb1 43.♖xf4+ ♔e6 44.♖a4.

But 40...♖xd2 looks OK for Black: 41.♕xd2 ♕h1+ 42.♕d1 ♕xd1+ 43.♔xd1 ♗xb1 44.♖xf4+ ♔e6 with 45.♖a4 ♗d3 being the difference, as the black a-pawn doesn't drop.



41.♘c4??

Oh no, the notorious 41st move! According to Jaan Ehlvest, Laznicka was not keeping his score. I don't know how bad Laznicka's time-trouble was, but Smith definitely had serious time problems. Basically, in this situation he had two options. One, to give check (41.♖b7+) or two, a bit more tricky and complicated, to 'lose' on time and to call your own flag. This sounds a bit strange, but the idea is to overstep the time and hope that your opponent cannot show you a completed scoresheet. If he can't, the game continues, as if the time-control had been reached.

41...♕g1+ 42.♔d2 ♖d8+ And finito. **43.♔e2 ♕xb1 44.♘e5+ ♔e6 45.♕c6+ ♔xe5 46.♕c7+ ♖d6 47.♕xg7+ ♔d5**

White resigned.

If you want to win tournaments like the World Open, it's imperative to win games like this. Sometimes risks have to be taken and a little luck can give you that final push. There's nothing shameful in that.

As for myself, I was out of contention for the first prize for a long time. There were two reasons for that. Reason number one was Jan Gustafsson. Round 4 started an hour earlier than the previous rounds. My good friend Jan was obviously not aware of this, since he still hadn't shown up 30 minutes into the round. In the end I decided to give him a call. But the delicate thing was that his room mate Paco Vallejo was also my opponent in that round! Now the big question was: would Jan get the message? (Because I considered it a bit unethical to ask him directly.) Would he sneak out of the room? ('Excuse me, I am going for a smoke', or something clever like that.) And would he leave Paco behind? But oh no, he didn't! And to be honest, I even had to sweat for my draw...

Reason number two was losing to the Exchange Slav (against Murtas Kazhgaleev – ed.). Losing is one thing, but to lose against such a drawish opening (although I must admit that sometimes they're not all that innocent) is a really bad sign. I mean, being mated, fine... being outplayed fine... a blunder, not so fine, but these things happen.

Anyway, despite these setbacks I had somehow managed to crawl back to the pack of guys that were trailing Laznicka by one point. Before the last round I had a discussion with a good friend of mine. (People who know me know that this can be only one person ☺. A friend, who doesn't know how time differences work and is always calling me at 4 in the morning and who is even calling me during the game, just to check if my mobile phone is switched on...) And the question was, what to hope for? Black against Laznicka, with the advantage to be able to play for first, even though winning with black against a serious opponent who only needs a draw won't be an easy task? Or to play with white against a GM who also needs to win (and at that point I had 4 out of 4 with white)? In the latter case a win would at least give me a nice paycheck. 'Of course' I was hoping to play with white. However, in the end, after my friend had called me all kinds of names (one of the nicer ones being chicken) and asked 'What happened to your balls?', I was paired with black against Laznicka anyway ☺.

KI 20.3 – E90
Viktor Laznicka
Loek van Wely
Philadelphia 2010 (9)

1.d4

For a while I contemplated 1..f5, but then I decided that I do have my limits and that today wasn't the day I wanted to lose my honour (or at least what was left of it... ☺).

1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3!

I was expecting 3.♘f3, when I would have been happy after 3...c5.

3...c5

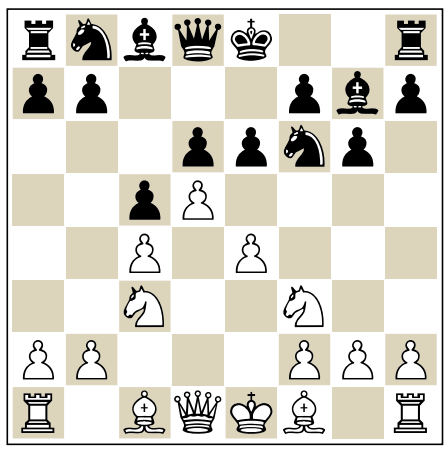
After 3...♗b4, 4.♕c2 is the killer.

4.d5 d6 5.e4 g6

I didn't fancy the lines after 5...exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7.f4 ♗g7 8.♗b5+.

6.♘f3 ♗g7

Or 6...exd5 7.exd5.

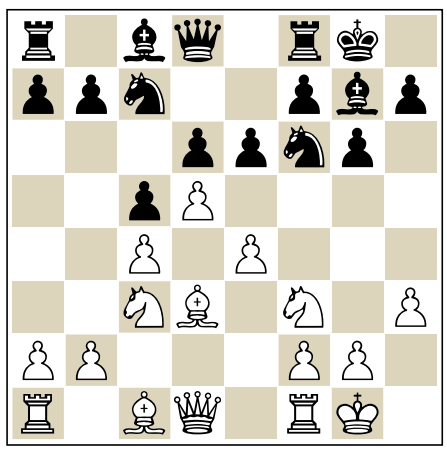


7.♗d3?!

Now I get what I want: a playable position!

The principled reaction, hoping to punish Black, would have been 7.dxe6 ♗xe6 8.♗f4 0-0 (8...♕a5 9.♘g5) 9.♗xd6 ♖e8 10.♗e2 ♕b6 11.0-0.

7...0-0 8.h3 ♘a6 9.0-0 ♘c7



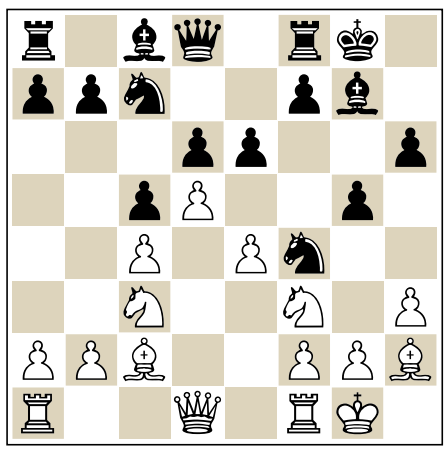
10.♗g5?!

Both 10.a4 and 10.♖e1 were better moves.

10...h6 11.♗h4

As 11.♗e3 exd5 12.exd5 runs into 12...b5!.

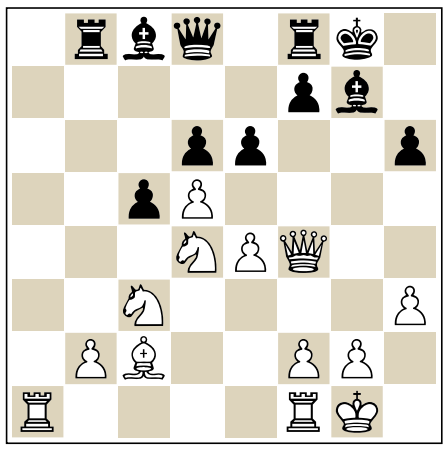
11...g5 12.♗g3 ♘h5 13.♗h2 ♘f4 14.♗c2



14...♖b8

I got distracted for a while by the idea of 14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 e5, trying to play the position like a Nimzo-Indian, but this is met by 16.♗xf4 gxf4 17.♔h2, followed by a quick ♖g1 and g3, and Black cannot hold his kingside formation.

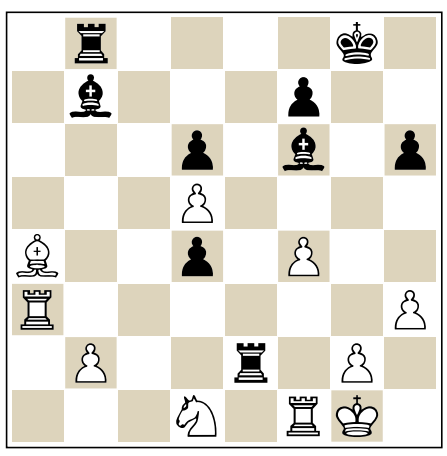
15.a4 a6 16.♕d2 b5 17.axb5 axb5 18.♗xf4 gxf4 19.cxb5 ♘xb5 20.♕xf4 ♘d4 21.♘xd4



21...cxd4

21...e5!? was an interesting alternative, e.g. 22.♕g3 exd4 23.♘d1 ♔h8!.

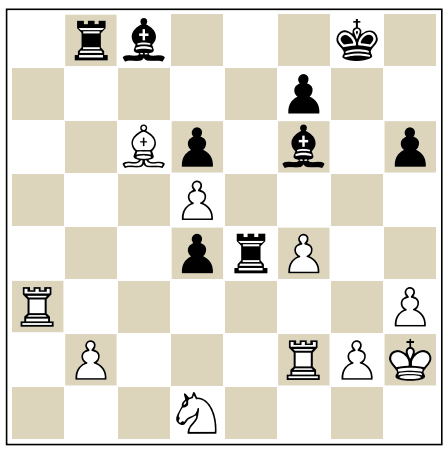
22.♘d1 exd5 23.exd5 ♖e8 24.♖a3 ♕f6 25.♕xf6 ♗xf6 26.f4 ♗b7 27.♗a4 ♖e2



28.♗c6

28.♖b3 looks nasty, but after 28...♔g7 29.♗c6 ♗xc6 30.♖xb8 ♗xd5 31.♘f2 d3 Black still has chances.

28...♗c8 29.♖f2 ♖e1+ 30.♖f1 ♖e2 31.♖f2 ♖e4 32.♔h2



32...h5?

The right prophylactic move to prevent White's next move was 32...♔g7.

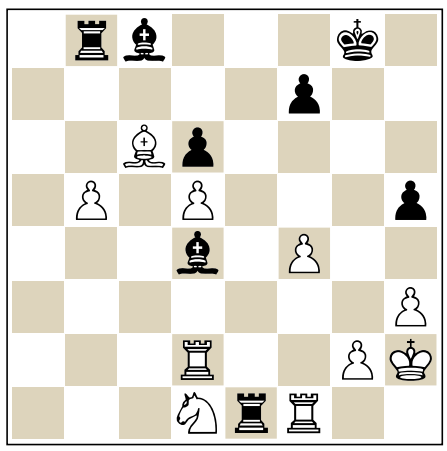
Philadelphia 2010

					$
1	Laznicka	CZE	2636	7½	17413
2	Harikrishna	IND	2660	7	5028
3	Smirin	ISR	2634	7	5028
4	McShane	ENG	2623	7	5028
5	Van Wely	NED	2653	6½	797
6	Gustafsson	GER	2640	6½	797
7	Potkin	RUS	2634	6½	797
8	Lenderman	USA	2598	6½	797
9	Vallejo	ESP	2703	6	118
10	Kamsky	USA	2702	6	118
11	Chanda	IND	2640	6	118
12	Kazhgaleev	KAZ	2609	6	118
13	Ehlvest	USA	2591	6	118
14	Hess	USA	2590	6	118
15	Kacheishvili	GEO	2587	6	118
16	Shabalov	USA	2585	6	118
17	Paragua	PHI	2497	6	862
18	Wang	NZL	2469	6	862
19	Bercys	USA	2427	6	862
20	Ganguly	IND	2672	5½	
21	Najer	RUS	2663	5½	
22	Kudrin	USA	2571	5½	
23	Stripunsky	USA	2570	5½	
24	Robson	USA	2569	5½	

119 players, 9 rounds

However, my silicon friend suggests a move that, for obvious reasons, I didn't even consider: 32...♗f5! 33.g4 ♗h7 34.f5. This looks terrible for Black, but after 34...h5 White cannot hold his pawn chain intact!

33.b4 d3 34.b5 ♗d4 35.♖f1 d2 36.♖d3 ♖e1 37.♖xd2

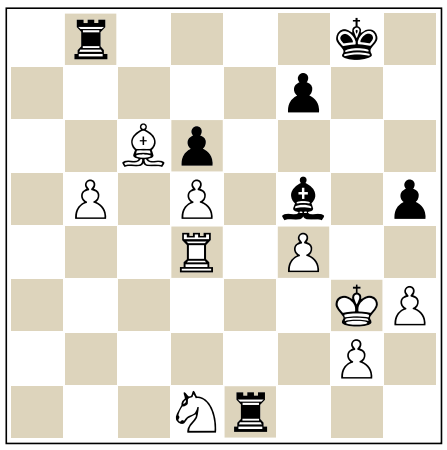


Putting an end to Black's aspirations, and so with my next move I offered a draw...

37...♖xf1 38.♖xd4

But he refused!!! Of course, I understood that I no longer had any winning chances, let's not be hypocritical about that, but I was still offering him 10k... Sometimes it is difficult to understand these guys... In the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, after losing his first game to Mamedyarov, the same player made a quick draw in the second game...

38...♖e1 39.♔g3 ♗f5



40.♔f2?

40.♔f3!, and yes, he might win this position.

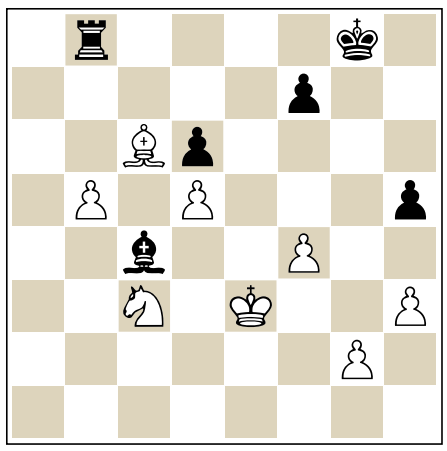
40...♖e4 41.♖xe4 ♗xe4 42.♘c3

42.♘b2?? ♗xd5! would have been nice ☺.

42...♗d3 43.♔e3 ♗f1 44.♔f2 ♗d3 45.♔e3

Now my opponent offered me a draw, but out of principle I had to continue...

45...♗c4?!



46.g4

Definitely stronger was 46.♔d4!.

46...h4 47.f5 ♗f1 48.♔f4 ♔g7 49.♘e4 ♗xh3?! I should have played 49...♗xb5. **50.f6+**

50.♘xd6 was probably still winning, but enough is enough, I guess. Time to take the money home.

50...♔g6 51.♗d7 ♗g2 52.♗f5+ ♔h6 53.g5+ ♔h5 54.♗g4+ ♔g6 55.♗f5+ ♔h5

Draw.

A small disclaimer to finish the article ☺. LeBron James is not going to the Bulls, as I hoped in my previous article. He will be playing for the Miami Heat for the 2010/11 season.

And a few words about taxes. Fortunately nobody died, but tournament organizer Bill Goichberg decided to collect 30 per cent taxes again. I always hate to see this happen, especially when it's so much. In medieval times, things where very simple. If taxes were too high, revolution was next, a few heads very chopped off, the tax rates were lowered and all was back to normal. Unfortunately, we now live in what is called 'democratic civilization'. I am not even sure if Goichberg is allowed to withhold those taxes from people who live in countries that have a tax treaty with the United States. And trying to get your money back is such a pain in the neck...

However, sometimes taxes can work in your favour. A Dutch GM (I won't reveal his name) did a good job for us when Russian chess players started asking him about the living conditions in Holland. His answer was unambiguous: 'Oh, you won't believe those taxes, they are so terribly high!' And so they finally went to Germany ☺.

The prize-money at the World Open was projected to be $250,000, but it was only guaranteed for $175,000, and in the end we naive GMs didn't get what we had hoped for... The GM to non-GM ratio was 1 to 2, so, if you are looking for norms, you know where to go. If you are looking for money, you're better off staying at home.

Finally, for the tourists, officially this tournament was taking place in Philadelphia, but in reality... I don't know where it was actually taking place, but definitely not in Philadelphia. The good news, however, is that next year it's supposed to return to the city centre of Philadelphia.

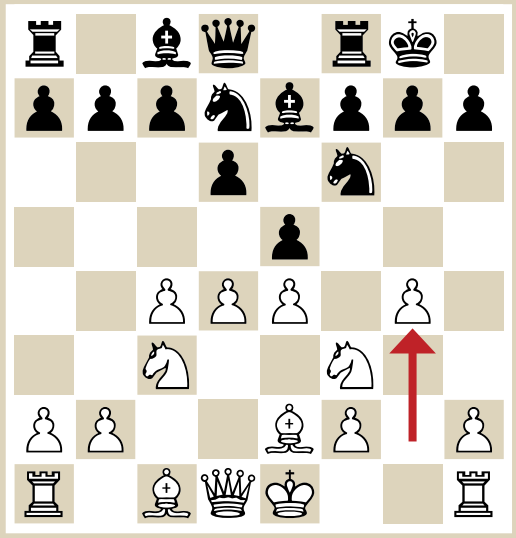
The last round. Loek van Wely still doesn't seem entirely sure that it is Viktor Laznicka who is sitting opposite him.

New Recipe in Old Indian

Jeroen Bosch

Secrets of Opening Surprises

7.g4!?



The universal antidote to all opening problems these days is to just throw your flank pawns at your opponent. Within the SOS-series we have seen numerous lines with audacious flank pawns. With absolutely no attempt at inclusiveness I will just mention:

– The Grünfeld with 4.h4 (SOS-3) and 4.g4 (SOS-12)
– A closed (or is it open?) Sicilian: 1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g4 (SOS-5)
– The Shirov Philidor: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘bd7 5.g4 (SOS-7)
– The Bogo-Indian with 6.g4 (SOS-7)
– The King's Indian with 6.g4 (SOS-9)
– The French Winawer with 4.♘ge2 and 6.g4 (SOS-12)
– The Ruy Lopez Bird with 5...h5 (SOS-12).

Many authors have noted this modern predilection for pawn moves on the flank, perhaps no one more lucidly than John Watson in his *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*.

Needless to say that the previous words introduce yet another flank pawn thrust in the opening. In the Old Indian experience with an early g4 (for that is what we are talking about here) is as yet so limited that we present the idea here to inspire others to follow the signs of the times. Oh, by the way, this line comes with the stamp of approval of a 2700+ player...

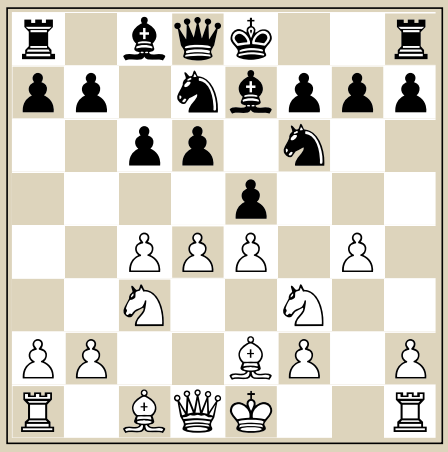
OI 6.3
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Dmitry Andreikin
Sochi 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.e4 ♗e7

So Black settles for the so-called Old Indian. Not the most popular opening in the world, but one that has been played at the highest level by such grandmasters as Bent Larsen and Eugenio Torre.

6.♗e2 0-0

Black usually prefers to play **6...c6** first, but there is no need to alter our strategy in that case. White can also go **7.g4** here, when taking on g4 allows White to win back the pawn on g7 (just as in Shabalov's g4-variation in the Meran).



Let's have a closer look:

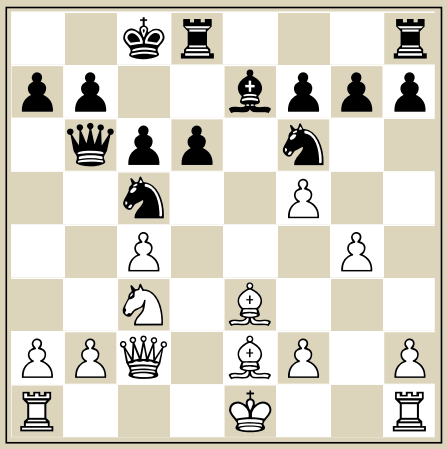
■ **7...exd4** – in response to a flank attack, Black opens the centre. Now White should take with the knight on d4, as 8.♕xd4 ♕b6 (8...♘c5 9.h3 but not 9.g5 ♘e6 10.♕d1 ♘h5 and White has created a hole on f4 for a black knight to hop into) 9.g5 ♘g4 10.♗f4 (10.♕xg7 ♕xf2+ 11.♔d1 ♖f8 12.♖f1 ♘e3+ 13.♗xe3 ♕xe3 is OK for Black) 10...♘de5 favours Black slightly, and after 11.0-0-0? ♕xd4 12.♖xd4 ♘xf2 13.♖f1 ♘h3 Black was winning in Wright-Xie, Canberra 2003.

8.♘**xd4** and now:

– 8...d5 is well-met by 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♘f5!.

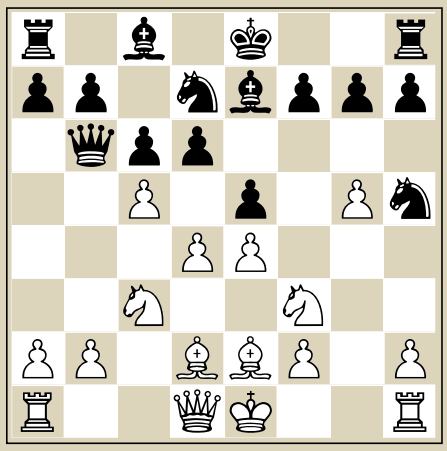
– After 8...0-0 both the sensible 9.♗e3 and the more blunt 9.g5 ♘e8 10.h4 look attractive.

– 8...♘c5 9.♘f5 (9.f3 planning ♗e3, ♕d2 and queenside castling is entirely possible of course. This would be a similar set-up to Mamedyarov's in our main game. However, here – with the pawn already on c6 and the king still on e8, leaving g7 undefended – the knight move makes a lot of sense) 9...♗xf5 10.exf5 ♕b6 11.♕c2 0-0-0 12.♗e3



With his bishop pair and space advantage White has an edge. Note that the 'weakening of the kingside' with g4 hardly counts – it rather gives White the possibility to gain even more space with g4-g5. 12...h5 (not wishing to continue quietly and suffer, Black seeks counterplay. 12...d5 13.cxd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♖xd5 15.0-0 is just better for White) 13.g5 ♘g4 14.♗xg4 hxg4 15.0-0-0 ♕b4 16.♕e2 ♘a4?! (16...♘d7) 17.♘xa4 ♕xa4 18.♕xg4. White was just a pawn up and won in Anisimov-Kovalenko, St. Petersburg 2009.

■ **7...♕a5 8.♗d2 ♕b6** is an interesting manoeuvre. However, after 9.g5 ♘h5 10.c5!



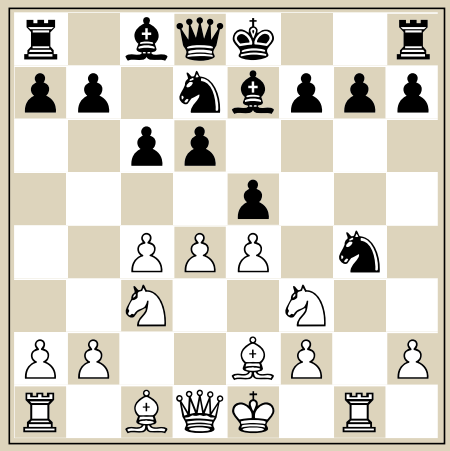
– 10...♕xb2? 11.♖b1 ♕a3 12.♖b3 ♕a5, and White wins after either 13.♘b5 or 13.cxd6.

– 10...♕c7? 11.cxd6 ♗xd6 12.♘xe5 proves Tarrasch right, although he wasn't speaking of unprotected knights on the edge...

– 10...dxc5 11.dxe5 g6 Lebedev-Belmeskin, Tomsk 2007 – had White now continued with 12.♕c2 ♕c7 13.0-0-0 then he would have been guaranteed of an edge.

■ Stopping the g-pawn with **7...h6** is always an important idea in g4-variations. The question usually is: which is more important, the space gained by the 'active' g4, or the squares weakened by the 'inconsiderate' pawn advance? 8.♖g1. This is played in the same spirit as 7.g4, kingside castling is now no longer on the cards for either side. (8.h3 is feasible as well, consolidating the space that has been gained on the kingside.) In Ustianovich-Pavlenko, Chervonograd 2008, Black continued with the same queen-manoeuvre as in the previous note: 8...♕a5 9.♗d2 (9.♕c2) 9...♕b6 10.♗e3 (10.c5!? ♕c7 11.cxd6 ♗xd6 12.h4 is certainly worth considering here) 10...♕xb2 11.♘a4 ♕b4+ 12.♗d2 ♕a3 13.♗c1 ♕b4+ 14.♗d2 ♕a3. Now White should perhaps have taken the draw by repetition (which means that 10.c5 is stronger than 10.♗e3), but instead he went for the unclear 15.♖b1 ♘b6 16.♘c3.

■ **7...♘xg4**. Taking the pawn must always be considered. White goes 8.♖g1.



Black does not necessarily have to withdraw his knight immediately as in the old game P.Schmidt-Lange, Bad Pyrmont 1950: 8...♘gf6, now that game was quickly drawn after 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♖xg7 ♗e6, which is in itself quite surprising after 7.g4!?. However, I don't understand why White did not just play 9.♖xg7 when his chances are to be preferred.

8...♘f8 looks stronger actually, when play might continue: 9.h3!? ♘f6 (9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘e5, and now White should not be afraid to sac another pawn. He comes out on top after 11.♗e3 ♘fg6 12.♕d2 ♗xh3 13.0-0-0) 10.♖xg7 and now 10...♘g6? is bad because of 11.♘g5, when the inventive 11...♖g8 loses after 12.♘xf7 ♕a5 13.♖xg8+ ♘xg8 14.dxe5! (14.♘h6 ♘xh6 15.♗xh6 ♕b6) 14...♔xf7 15.exd6, and White regains the piece.

8...♘b6!? is perhaps best, when 9.dxe5 (9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘e5 gives Black more than enough

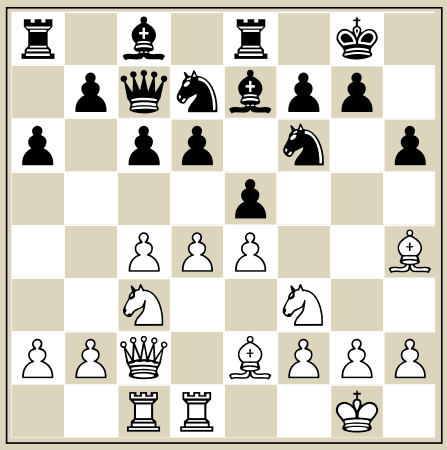
counterplay) 9...♘xe5 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12.♖xg7 does look like an equal endgame.

7.g4

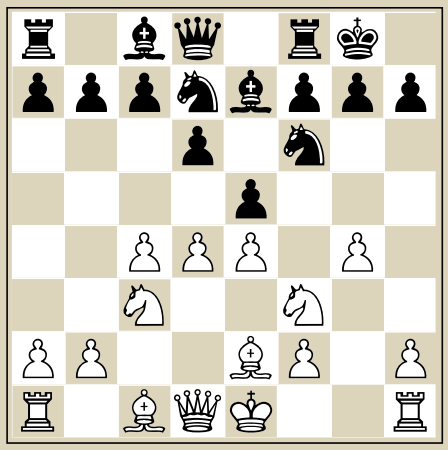
Mamedyarov clearly is a child of his times. It is very interesting to see a top grandmaster play g4 rather than go for a ± position that theory promises the first player after the more mundane 7.0-0.

One reason why Black often prefers 6...c6 over 6...0-0 is 7.d5 ♘c5 8.♕c2, when White has closed the centre (a concession of sorts) but still has the option to castle queenside. Grandmaster Andreikin does not seem to mind this too much.

Just to briefly show you that even on a high level it is not easy to make something of White's traditional slight plus in the Old Indian: 7.0-0 c6 8.♕c2 a6 9.♖d1 ♕c7. The traditional Old-Indian set-up. Black often continues ...b5, ...♗b7, ...♖fe8 or ...♖fd8, and ...♖ac8, with a solid Ruy Lopez-like middlegame. Rodshtein-Andreikin, Puerto Madryn 2009, went: 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 ♖e8 12.♖ac1



12...g5!? Well, here's that g-pawn again! 13.♗g3 ♘h5 14.d5 c5 15.h3 ♘f4 16.♘h2 ♘xe2+ 17.♕xe2 ♘f6 18.♘g4 ♗xg4 19.hxg4 ♕d7 20.f3 h5!? 21.gxh5 (21.♕e3 ♔h7 22.♕xg5 ♖g8 23.♕h4 ♘xg4 24.♕xh5+ ♘h6 with obvious compensation for the pawn) 21...♘xh5 22.♔f2 ♔g7 23.♖h1 ♖h8 24.♖h3 ♘f4 25.♗xf4 exf4 26.♖ch1 ♗f6 27.♕d3 ♗e5 28.♔e2 ♖xh3 29.♖xh3 b5, with superior chances, but White managed to hold.



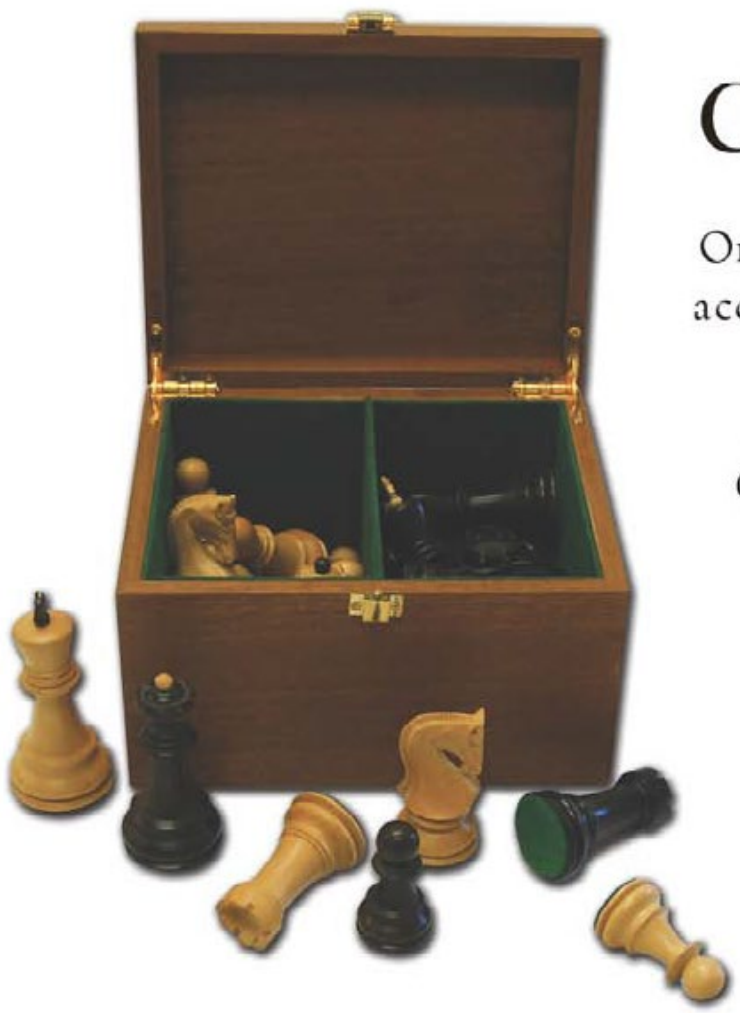
7...exd4

Opening the g-file in front of your king is not very logical. For example: 7...♘xg4 8.♖g1 and now:

– 8...f5 9.exf5 ♘gf6 10.♘g5 ♘b6 11.♘e6 ♗xe6 12.fxe6 exd4 13.♕xd4 favours White.

– 8...♘gf6 9.♗h6 (9.♗e3) 9...♘e8 10.♕c2.

– 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘ge5 10.♗e3 and White's position plays itself.



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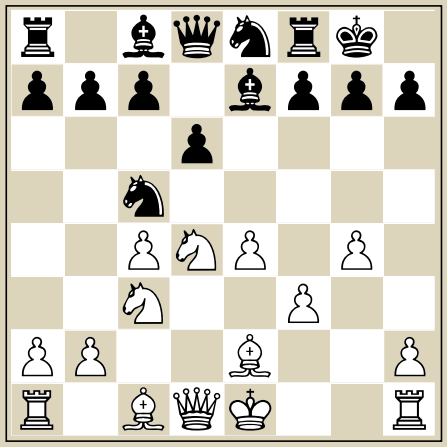
8.♘xd4 ♘c5 9.f3 ♘e8

Black understandably wants to punish his opponent for his early g4, but White now has solid structural advantages like central control and space. It looks as if White has played the Sämisch versus the King's Indian, but Black has forgotten to fianchetto his bishop and has insufficient counterplay.



10.♗e3

The most ambitious continuation, ignoring the threatened check, when the king will flee to the queenside anyway. Meanwhile, 10.0-0 c6 11.♗e3 was enough for a very pleasant plus.

10...♗h4+ 11.♔d2 g6 12.♔c2 ♘g7 13.♕d2

White's opening has been a total success.

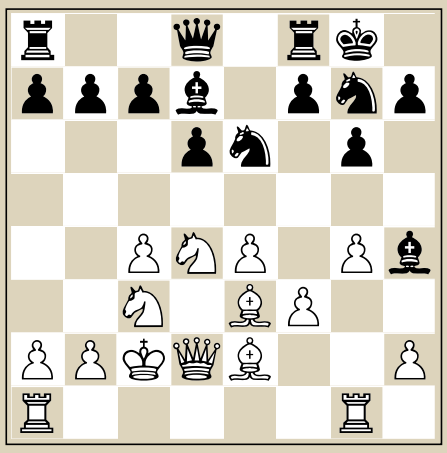
13...♗d7

After 13...f5 there is either 14.gxf5 gxf5 15.♖ag1 for an all-out attack or the positional 14.exf5 gxf5 15.♖af1.

14.♖hg1

After 14.♖ad1, 14...♘a4 is an idea to relieve some of the pressure. Although White always keeps an edge.

14...♘ce6



15.♘f5!

Not difficult to find, Black cannot even contemplate to take the knight.

15...♗f6

15...gxf5? 16.gxf5 ♘c5? (16...♔h8) 17.♗h6 ♗f6 18.♗xg7 ♗xg7 19.♕h6 is a straightforward win.

16.♘h6+ ♔h8 17.g5 ♗e7 18.f4

Now in order to avoid being crushed Black has to play

18...f5 19.exf5

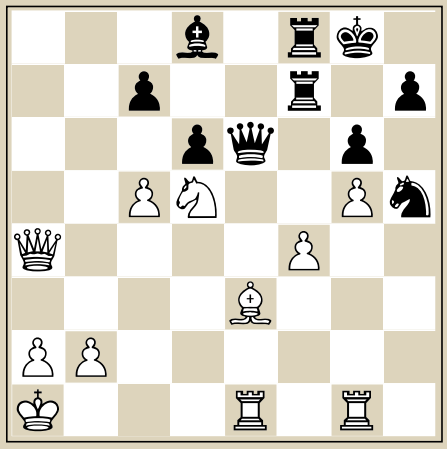
19.gxf6 ♗xf6 20.♘d5 is also better for White, but there is nothing wrong with the game move.

19...♘xf5 20.♘xf5 ♖xf5 21.♗g4 ♖f7 22.♖ae1 ♘g7 23.♕d5!

A double attack to win material. **23...♔g8 24.♗xd7 ♕xd7 25.♕xb7 ♖af8 26.♔b1 ♗d8 27.♕xa7 ♘h5 28.♕a4 ♕h3**

Andreikin seeks counterchances with this objectively bad move, understandably he did not much like the ending after 28...♕xa4 29.♘xa4 ♘xf4.

29.♘d5 ♕xh2 30.c5! ♕h3 31.♔a1 ♕e6



32.♕c6

The beginning of a faulty manoeuvre. It was correct to keep the knight on d5 with 32.♖d1! when after 32...♖f5 33.♕b3 ♕f7 (33...c6?? 34.♘e7++-), 34.c6! fixes the beast firmly on d5 with a won game.

32...♖f5 33.♖d1 33.♘xc7.

33...♕e8!

It is hard to blame Mamedyarov for overlooking this move which paradoxically offers to trade queens. The problem is that White's light pieces suddenly hang in the air.

34.♕xe8 ♖xe8

Now it is clear that White is losing some material.

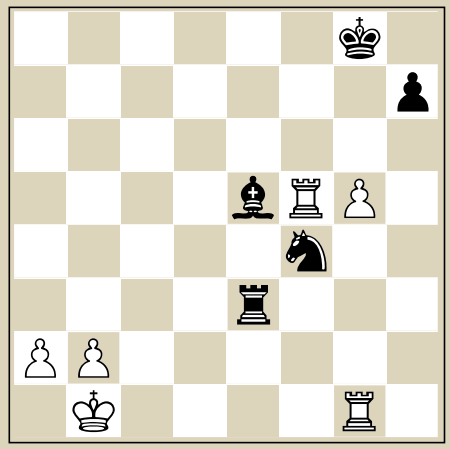
35.cxd6

35.♗c1 dxc5.

35...♖xd5 36.♖xd5 ♖xe3 37.dxc7

37.♖e5 ♖xe5 38.fxe5 cxd6 39.exd6 ♔f7.

37...♗xc7 38.f5 gxf5 39.♖xf5 ♘f4 40.♔b1 ♗e5



Just look at that bishop that was once stuck on d8 defending a pawn, and that knight which was formerly such a pain on the edge. Black's pieces have miraculously come alive and coordinate well. A draw is the normal result now.

41.♖f1 ♘d3 42.♖5f3 ♖xf3 43.♖xf3 ♘xb2 44.♔c2 ♔g7 45.♖e3 ♘c4 46.♖e4 ♘a3+ 47.♔b3 ♗d6 48.♖d4 ♗f8 49.♖d8 ♗c5 50.♖a8 ♘b1 51.♔c4 ♗e7 52.a4

Black also draws after 52.♖a7 ♔f7 53.a4 ♘d2+ (53...♔e6? 54.♔d3 ♗xg5 55.a5 ♘a3 56.a6 ♗h4 57.♖b7+-) 54.♔d5 ♘b3 55.♖b7 ♘a5 56.♖b5 ♗d8.

52...♘d2+ 53.♔d5 ♘b3 54.♖b8 ♘a5 55.♖b5 ♗d8 56.♔e6 ♘c4 57.♔d7

Winning the bishop, but Black drew after

57...♘b6+ 58.♔xd8 ♘xa4 59.♔e7 ♘c3 60.♖c5 ♘e4 61.♖e5 ♘f2 62.♖f5 ♘e4 63.♔e6 ♔g6 64.♖f6+ ♔xg5 65.♖f7 ♔g4 66.♖xh7 ♘g5+ 67.♔f6 ♘xh7+ 68.♔e5

Draw.

Modest Petrosian

After the big book about the three matches between Mikhail Botvinnik and Vasily Smyslov, New In Chess recently published a smaller book about the match between Botvinnik and Tigran Petrosian, in which the Patriarch finally and definitively lost his crown. Hans Ree was a Petrosian fan.

I occasionally went to the office of the Dutch Press Agency in the centre of Amsterdam, where chess journalist Berry Withuis received the moves of the match by telex. It was the only way to see them shortly after they had been played, for this was not only before the Internet, but also long before teletext or the common use of faxes. The rattling sound of the telex when a new message came in added lustre to the event. Stop the presses, another move by Botvinnik has come in!

On one occasion, Withuis and I were joined by another friend of his, Wim Wolthuis. Wolthuis was rooting for Botvinnik, whereas my sympathies were with the challenger, as they had been from the moment I had started following world championship matches.

Nearsighted as youngsters tend to be, I found it difficult to accept that a man who had made his international debut in Nottingham 1936 was still playing for the world championship. Both Withuis and Wolthuis were born in 1920, so their perspective was different. Botvinnik had been a hero of their adolescence.

The telex machine awoke from a brief slumber. Did it have news for us? Yes, moves from the eighth match game were coming in. At that point the score in the match was equal. Botvinnik had won the first game as Black with his proverbial iron hand, creating a textbook example of relentless logical strategy. Then Petrosian had equalized the score in Game 5.

Now, in Game 8, Petrosian, as Black, was playing the Queen's Gambit Accepted for the third time in the match. This time he seemed to be in trouble. As an improvement on the sixth game, Botvinnik had sacrificed a pawn on move 11 for what looked like a dangerous attack.

Not that we could evaluate the many tactical ramifications, but as the line had obviously been prepared by Botvinnik 'in the quiet of his study', it had to be good. Petrosian was in trouble and Wolthuis rejoiced.

But then we had to wait a long time for Botvinnik's 15th move. I will not pretend that after 47 years I still remember that long wait; in his notes to the game Botvinnik writes that he spent 45 minutes on his 15th move after realizing that his home preparation had not been perfect.

Later his attack petered out and Petrosian even got a better ending. Eventually the game was drawn.

Chess with Columbo

A few days later, at my club, I found a small group of analysts headed by Wolthuis that tried to find a win or at least a big advantage for Botvinnik from the position after Black's 14th move. This was not just disinterested scholarship. Wolthuis very much wanted a win to restore justice to chess and to the insight of the great Botvinnik.

Wolthuis was a good player. To interrupt my story about chess at the highest level for a bit of trivia, one of his games, a win against C.H.O'.D. Alexander at the tournament of Maastricht 1946, was used in an instalment of the popular American TV series about detective lieutenant Columbo.

An episode from 1973, entitled *The Most Dangerous Match*, made a variation on the Spassky-Fischer match that, for a brief moment, had made chess a subject fit for a popular TV show. In the Columbo show an American player is World Champion and a Soviet player is his challenger.

On the eve of their championship match the American murders his challenger. He understands that he will never be able to defend

his title successfully fairly, because the Soviet player had finished him off brutally with the queen sacrifice 25.♕xb4 in an informal game, just as Wolthuis had done against Alexander in 1946.

In the show the Soviet champion has to explain patiently to the American what would happen if he took the queen. In real life Alexander needed no explanation and resigned at once.

From the notes by Botvinnik and others it appears that there was no win for White in the position on which the analysts of my club had racked their brains, only a slight advantage. These notes also seem to prove that Petrosian, faced by a razor-sharp opening novelty from the mighty Botvinnik's laboratory, had put up a perfect defence for many moves. Was it really an injustice that he hadn't succumbed to the attack?

Unlucky Strategist

I had become a fan of Petrosian after reading Euwe and Muhring's book about the Candidates' tournament of Amsterdam 1956. It is called *Das Kandidatenturnier für die Weltmeisterschaft 1956*. Two Dutch writers and a Dutch publisher (W. ten Have), but a different language to reach a wider public. The difference with the present time is that the language chosen for optimal market penetration was German.

Through the years there has been a lot of discussion about the real authorship of Euwe's co-productions. Judging by the authoritative tone of the notes to the games and of the general description of the tournament and the individual rounds I tend to think that the book is Euwe's work and that Muhring's contribution was mainly secretarial.

Euwe was full of praise for Petrosian's play, calling him a great strategist. Once again a fine game by Petrosian, or words to that effect, is a constant refrain. But Euwe also called Petrosian the unluckiest of the 10 participants. Incidentally, they played 18 rounds, just a trifle by the standards of that time, which made it the shortest Candidates' tournament in history, together with Budapest 1950.

Here is a litany of Petrosian's misfortunes in the early stages of the event. In the first round he lost fair and square against Geller. But then Round 2 saw the infamous game against Bronstein in which Petrosian, in a completely winning position, left his queen en prise. With healthy scepticism Euwe writes that after accepting the present Bronstein was terribly conscience-stricken 'if we can believe him.'

Round three: Petrosian has an easy win against Smyslov, but lets him escape with a draw. Round four: the same thing against Spassky. Round five: against Panno, Petrosian misses a little combination that would have netted him a pawn and almost certainly the game.

After that round normalcy set in. But altogether, Petrosian had squandered 2½ points in the first five rounds, showing great strategy on the way.

The game that impressed me most was that against Spassky in Round four, a flank opening in which Petrosian, as White, first gained space on the queenside, then attacked Black's centre with f2-f4, forcing Black's e-pawn to move to e4, and finally blew up Black's pawn chain e4-f5-g5 by playing g3-g4. Total strategy. Phenomenal play, according to Euwe.

But then, when the winning move was so obvious that almost any competent player would have played it in a blitz game, Petrosian missed it, squandering most of his advantage. 'Despite Petrosian's mistake this 71-move game will remain one of the most valuable of chess history' wrote Euwe. In my own games I have often tried to emulate Petrosian's strategy in that game against Spassky.

Journalist Petrosian

At the time a FIDE rule was in effect that modern observers may find amusing. During the match the players were allowed only one second who could assist them with the analysis of adjourned games. This unenforcable rule was ignored, of course. Petrosian's official second was his long-term assistant Isaac Boleslavsky, while Suetin's official function was that of a reporter for an Armenian newspaper. Although they bent the rule a bit, it is still a far cry from contemporary team work.

A long – more than 10 pages – and quite interesting article by Petrosian, written after the match, is included in the book. It begins characteristically with the modest words 'I never thought that I would play a match for the world championship'. Many chess players who had no realistic chance to ever play such a match, still dreamed about the possibility, but apparently Petrosian, who had played in every Candidates' tournament from 1953, never did. Indeed, several writers who knew him well have noted that it was always very difficult to convince Petrosian of his great strength.

Petrosian writes that in a way he was well prepared for a championship match because he had earlier followed four such matches as a journalist, starting in 1957, which means that he had reported on four Botvinnik matches, two against Smyslov and two against Tal.

He gives a lively description of the press room in Moscow: 'Passions begin to boil up. The most interesting events take place on the boards. It seems that the po-

sition in the game could hardly give rise to some of the ideas seen in the press room. And then someone suggests: what if...? Interesting! As if by magnetism, the players are drawn to this board. Embellishing, arguing, discussing, as if growing into their roles, the advocates of each side show their imagination, calculation and gift of foresight. It is no matter if the moves suggested are not the best, nor if it transpires occasionally that in the confusion of the analysis, somebody has had two moves in a row, nor that the spectators will never see any of the stuff being looked at here. What matters is that experienced players, in the heat and confusion of the press room, are able to form a picture of the course of the game, are able to see not only what has happened, but also, rather more importantly, what could have happened.'

Petrosian calls his many hours spent in the press room an excellent school for playing a world championship match.

This is a description of a bygone era. Of course a Moscow press room with an abundance of very strong grandmasters could not be duplicated everywhere in the world. The nearest to this fine spectacle that I have witnessed was the press room at the Kasparov-Karpov match in New York in 1990, with Najdorf holding court. Five years later, during the match between Kasparov and Anand 'on top of the world' at the top floor of the New York World Trade Center, the press room was lifeless.

Maybe it had something to do with the fact that by that time commercial chess engines could calculate variations sensibly, though there were other reasons as well. Anyway, nowadays the quiet of the graveyard reigns at the press rooms of important chess events, where real chess boards are often absent and reporters study their laptop screens.

'Interesting position, what do you think of it?' 'You start Rybka, I'll start Stockfish and we'll compare our opinions.'

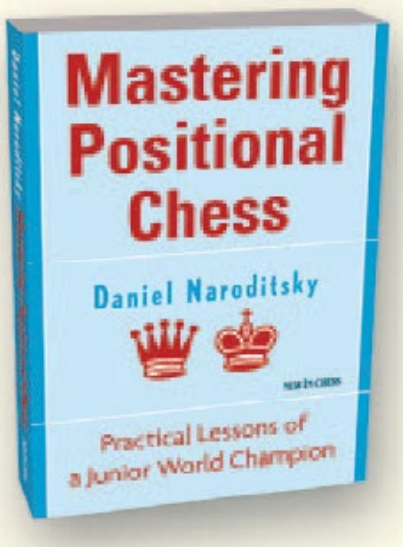
In Spartan Quarters

Petrosian started his preparations late, because for a long time he wasn't sure if Botvinnik really wanted to defend his title. It was only at the end of October 1962 that he was informed that Botvinnik was willing to play, and after some negotiations it was decided that the start of the match would be on March 23 of the next year.

Petrosian started his preparation at the Litvinov sanatorium, near Moscow, where he was joined by Boleslavsky, Suetin and Vladimir Simagin.

Suetin adds some details in his book *Tigran Petrosian, Die Karriere eines Schachgenies* (my translation): 'Among the patients were numerous victims of Stalin's repression, who had escaped death, but had lost many years of their normal life and usually also their good health. With one of them, who had spent 18 years in camps (his name was Alexander Markovich), I had many conversations. He didn't like to speak about his sufferings, but kept repeating: "I always believed that justice would triumph and the Communist Party would receive us in their ranks again." Altogether the atmosphere was depressed. During our relatively short stay in this sanatorium there were nine cases of death (of course not because of insufficient care, the patients were just too ill and weak).'

They stayed there for 36 days. It was bitterly cold, almost minus 30 degrees Celcius for two weeks. Suetin writes: 'We really had to force ourselves to climb on



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Pete Tamburro, Chess Life

"The book is quite excellent. It is easy to understand and contains a good collection of illustrative examples."
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the beds (here I was Tigran's constant companion).' Did they have to keep each other warm?

Later they moved to more luxurious quarters, the sanatorium of the architects in Sukhanova, an old aristocratic estate where the Moscow intelligentsia came for relaxation and where, according to Suetin, everything was splendid and elegant: 'The luxurious chandeliers, columns, fire-places, the unique library – everything reminded one of times that were long past.'

Suetin describes Petrosian as a liberal boss who encouraged his seconds to follow their fancy in far-fetched opening variations that would never occur in a world championship match. This in contrast with Paul Keres, who was found by Suetin to be a much stricter master.

Sometimes Petrosian said: no work tomorrow, we'll play blitz. He spent much time on skiing and billiards, which made Simagin remark that all the players he had assisted in his life had at least become accomplished billiard players. Of course, a lot of serious work was done also.

Joys of Chitchat

To return to Petrosian's long article on the match, at the end of it he tells us about one aspect of match play that he found quite difficult to endure: the fact that during the game he couldn't talk to anyone. During a tournament round he liked to have some friendly small-talk with other players, even though he knew that some arbiters didn't look kindly on this harmless practice.

He wrote 'The conversations cover all sorts of things: how many spectators are in today, what do you think of Master X's tie? And, of course, one simply has to share with one's comrades the latest urgent sporting news, just heard – Milan 4, Santos 2, Spartak 1, CSKA 1... And, of course, events on the board are not ignored: grandmaster Y has messed up the opening and stands badly, and a couple of moves ago, master Z could have won a pawn with ♘g4 (it will be interesting to ask him after the game, why he didn't play this).'

Since the time that Petrosian wrote this, arbiters who don't look kindly on this practice of friendly conversation have won an almost complete victory.

Signs and Symbols

The book under review – if you can call my rambling observations a review – is a hotch-potch of many ingredients, all substantial. Although Botvinnik is presented as the author on the cover, many other chess annotators have made a contribution. Of the 22 match games – Petrosian won by 12½-9½ – seven have been analysed by Botvinnik and two by Petrosian. Other games have annotations written by Soviet chess players, among them Viktor Kortchnoi, during or right after the match. Five games were annotated by Vladimir Akopian especially for this book and one game has Kasparov's annotations, taken from the *My Great Predecessors* series.

Apart from Petrosian's long article, which I have already mentioned, there is a short article by Botvinnik entitled 'Why did I lose the match?'. Then there is a section which gives all other games between Botvinnik and Petrosian, many of them with annotations, followed by a chapter about a training match between Botwinnik and Furman, played in January and February 1963, of which the games had never been published before.

And finally, of course, there is Botvinnik's notebook, though in this case it has nothing to do with the match that is the main subject of the book. The publisher, our very own New In Chess, calls it 'Botvinnik's final secret notebook, containing his entire opening preparation' in an advertisement, but this is slightly misleading. As Igor Botvinnik explains, what is given here is only a part of the notes that Botvinnik wrote in 1969 while preparing for his intended match against Bobby Fischer.

My impression from these notes is that Botvinnik didn't really exert himself to prepare for a match that was never likely to be played.

As in the notebooks that were included in the earlier book about Botvinnik's three matches against Smyslov, Botvinnik obviously used some signs in a different way than we do now.

We see him apply the sign ∓ to a position in which White is clearly better. We also see a line of the Slav in which three moves by Black get an exclamation mark and none of the moves a question mark, even though at the end of the line Botvinnik concludes that Black is a pawn down without any compensation. I think that in this case the exclamation mark doesn't mean 'good move', as we would expect, but something like 'an important moment'.

Botvinnik was not obliged to use the signs in his private notebook in the way that the children of the Informator would come to understand them, of course. The editors might have pointed out that there is a problem here, but just as with the book about the matches between Botvinnik and Smyslov, they didn't bother.

The great Austrian writer Karl Kraus, who maintained that the fate of the world depended of the correct use of a comma, was moved to paroxysms of rage by carelessness in such matters. I am no Karl Kraus. All in all, this is a fine book to have.

HANS REE

Matthew Sadler is a grandmaster and former professional chess player (and an esteemed former book reviewer for New In Chess). He is currently working as IT Infrastructure Architect at one of the biggest teaching hospitals in Holland. An unexpected day off from work on May 5th (Liberation Day in the Netherlands) gave him the idea to try his hand at a chess tournament again, and his unexpected tournament win did wonders for his motivation! Will the sweet taste of victory and his regained pleasure in the game lure him back to the chess circuit? If he's sensible, he'll stick to the day job (his words).

In Search of Lost Time

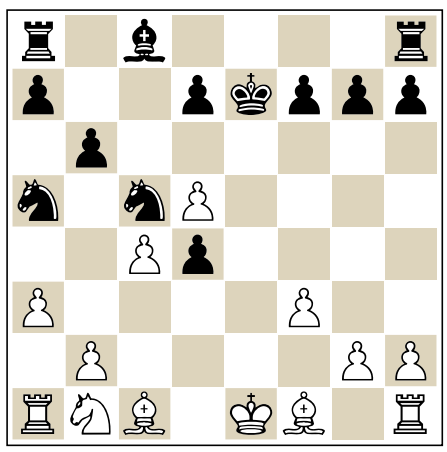
and of nopenings and nendgames

When I took the decision to stop playing professionally all those years ago, I rather naively thought that I might start enjoying chess after all those gruesome years as a professional. You know the idea – play freely and creatively, win the odd nice game, losing doesn't matter any more... It turned out to be rather less fun than I'd hoped. I wasn't the problem, it was other people! They all looked so annoyingly happy after stealing all my rating points! Playing for pleasure and losing with grace was a far tougher deal than I'd realized. Around 2003, I gave up the uneven fight, packed in the Bundesliga and was determined never to touch a chess piece again. I wasn't quite as rigorous as I intended (I played every year for my employer in the Dutch team championship for normal working people, and still gave the odd simultaneous or lecture) but I basically took every opportunity I could *not* to play chess.

Looking back, a major turning point for me was reviewing Beim's excellent book on the Leningrad Dutch and then playing the Dutch a few times. If you can look at the e6-square for a whole game without feeling queasy, then you've taken the important first step to playing utter rubbish with total conviction. And that was the solution. No more subtle move orders, no more analysis, no more databases. Start badly, get worse and then swindle them at the end!

The first real chance I got to test my new attitude was the Liberation Day tournament in Wageningen on May 5th. It was a rapid tournament, which was quite reassuring. If you're going to play bad openings all the time, it's nice to know that the agony won't last much longer than a half hour. I started in principled fashion with black, wheeling out the 'Creepy Crawly' (1.e4 h6 2.d4 a6) and raced to 4/4 beating IM Ris and Timman along the way, despite blundering a queen and a piece. Blundering both in one game would have probably been fatal, but spreading it over the 2 games seemed to work quite admirably.

The next game was with black against the top seed Daniel Friedman, which also began rather weirdly. While watching my computer crash and reboot after pressing on the 'Classify Opening' button, it occurred to me that I really needed a new word to describe what I was doing at the start of the game. So I came up with 'nopening'. And what a nopening it was! Take a look at the position after move 13 and see if you can work out how we reached it.



An unexpected bonus day off from his employer gave Matthew Sadler the idea to try his hand at a chess tournament again. Guess what happened?

PETER BINKHORST

Start badly, get worse and then swindle them at the end!

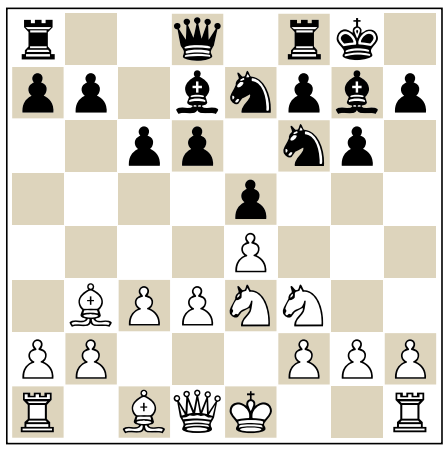
I played exceptionally well for a while and then made an almighty mess of it, while almost losing on time (a definite case of nendgame technique there...). To my surprise however, I ended up capturing all of Daniel's pawns without losing too many of my pieces and managed to close out the game for 5/5.

And then something quite wonderful happened – a decent game.

RL 12.4 – C77
Matthew Sadler
Erik van den Doel
Wageningen 2010 (5)

About a year ago, I gave a little lecture at my local chess club in Amersfoort about Steinitz. One of the things I've always really liked about him was his handling of the white side of the Lopez. The wonderful game against Chigorin is of course the most famous example, but I was just as impressed with the second game against Lasker in the World Championship Match of 1894:

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 d6 5.c3 ♗d7 6.♗a4 g6 7.♘bd2 ♗g7 8.♘c4 0-0 9.♘e3 ♘e7 10.♗b3 c6

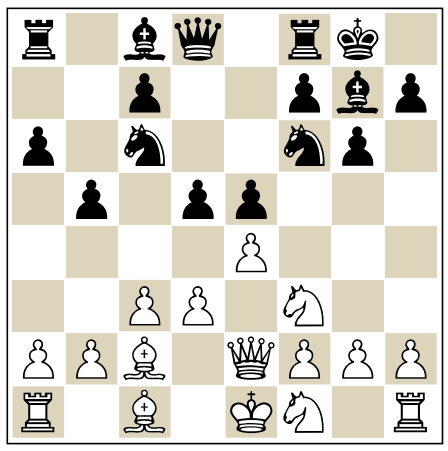


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

11.h4! ♕c7 12.♘g5! d5 13.f3! ♖ad8 14.g4 dxe4 15.fxe4 h6 16.♕f3 ♗e8 17.♗c2 ♘d7 18.♘h3 ♘c5 19.♘f2 b5 20.g5 h5 21.♘f5 gxf5 22.exf5 f6 23.g6 ♘xg6 24.fxg6 ♗xg6 25.♖g1 e4 26.dxe4 ♔h7 27.♖xg6 ♔xg6 28.♕f5+, and it was very soon 1-0.

Strange how that sort of knowledge can come in handy 116 years later!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 g6 7.♘bd2 ♗g7 8.♘f1 0-0 9.♕e2 b5 10.♗c2 d5



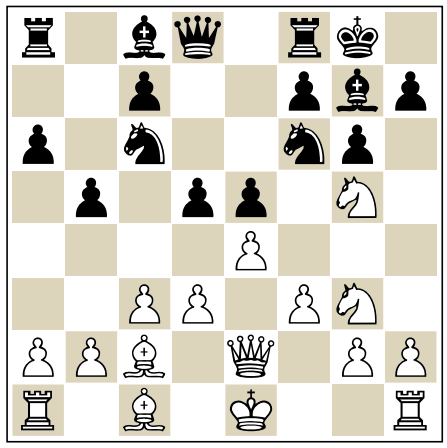
11.♘g3

Not a great square for the knight of course, but the pieces have to go somewhere.

11...♗e6

Looking to meet 12.0-0 with 12...dxe4 13.dxe4 ♗c4, but the text is rather provocative. And if you just close your eyes and think of Steinitz, then you just have to play...

12.♘g5 ♗g4 13.f3 ♗c8



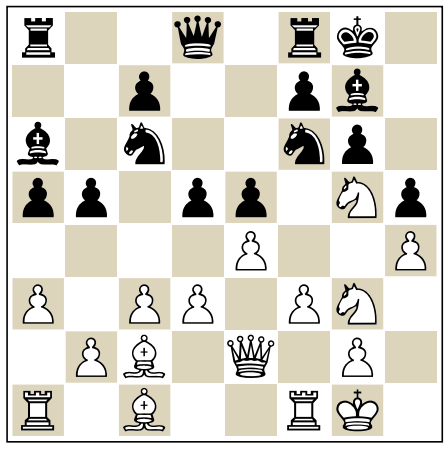
14.h4!

It really does give huge satisfaction to be able to play such an awful lunge on the wing and to imagine Steinitz looking on in approval!

14...h5 15.0-0 a5 16.a3!

Erik had used a lot of precious time on his last move, so this was a very easy move to play quickly, holding back ...b4 and waiting for Black to follow up his previous move logically with...

16...♗a6



17.f4!

Now the position is quite unpleasant for Black. The kingside light squares (e6, f7, g6, h5) are particularly vulnerable.

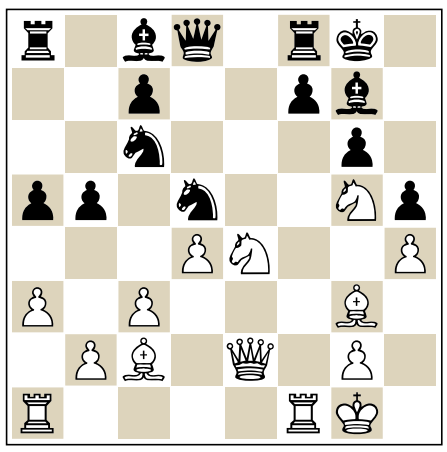
17...exf4 18.♗xf4 dxe4 19.♘3xe4 ♘d5 20.♗g3

This was a rather irritating moment – I don't mind Black taking my bishop, but I don't really want to leave it on f4. I want to get it out of the way and start hitting f7. I really wanted to go for 20.♗e3, aiming for 21.♗c5 annoying the f-pawn's main defender, but I felt I'd regret allowing 20...♘xe3 21.♕xe3 ♘d4.

20...♗c8

Necessary to cover the e6-square against the threat of 21.♘xf7 ♖xf7 22.♖xf7 ♔xf7 23.♘g5+.

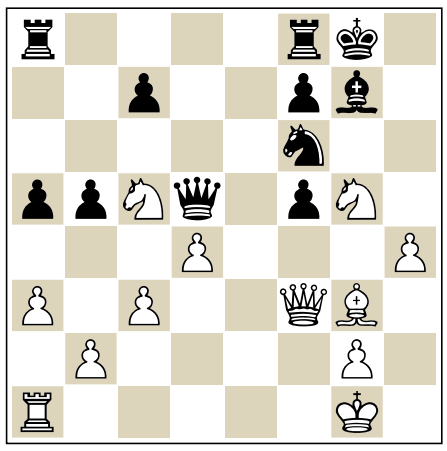
21.d4



21...♘ce7

This all looks awful, but if Black gets in ...♘f5 then he's weathered the first storm. I spent a little while weighing up the options here, but in the end I found something I liked. I wasn't 100% sure about it (I'm still not) but with Black short of time, it seemed quite awkward to deal with.

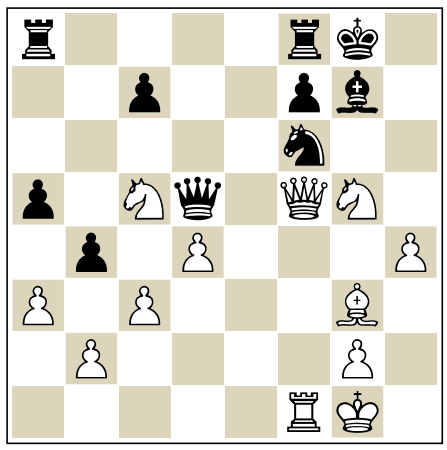
22.♘c5 ♘f5 23.♗xf5 ♗xf5 24.♖xf5 gxf5 25.♕xh5 ♘f6 26.♕f3 ♕d5



27.♖f1

So I'm going to pick up the f5 pawn, which gives me 2 pawns for the exchange. I've got 2 great knights and the c7 pawn is hanging as well. The only thing that worried me slightly was my king, which could be vulnerable to ...♘g4 and a rook to the back rank. But I decided that a timely ♔f2-f3 (or ♔h2-h3) would most likely deal with the biggest problems adequately. I'd also spotted the trick in the game, and I was curious whether Erik would spot it as well.

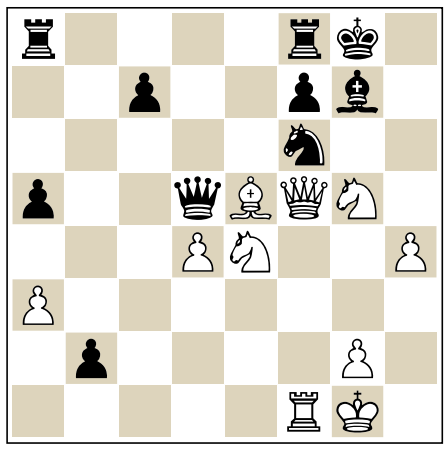
27...b4 28.♕xf5



28...bxc3?? 29.♗e5!

No queen exchange any more. Suddenly Black can't defend his kingside.

29...cxb2 30.♘ce4!



I've never seen that much pressure on a single piece before.

30...♖fe8 31.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 32.♕h7+ ♔f8 33.♗xf6

Black resigned.

That took me to 6/6 and left me a point clear of the rest of the field. Time for a solid last game with black to close out the tournament. It did occur to me how stupid I'd feel if the Creepy Crawly went totally wrong in this situation, but I consoled myself with the thought that these games weren't being published live on the Internet. No one would ever know how I made a mess of it. I did almost give my opponent a friendly hug after the opening moves 1.e4 a6 2.c4 e5 3.

f4. Yes! I didn't need to do anything crazy – my opponent was doing it for me! Even after Black's not completely relevant move ...a6, a King's Gambit system with c4 is not a great success. A pawn on c4 just doesn't quite exert the same menace as a bishop on c4 (and so he also notched up his seventh win and won the tournament with a perfect score – ed.).

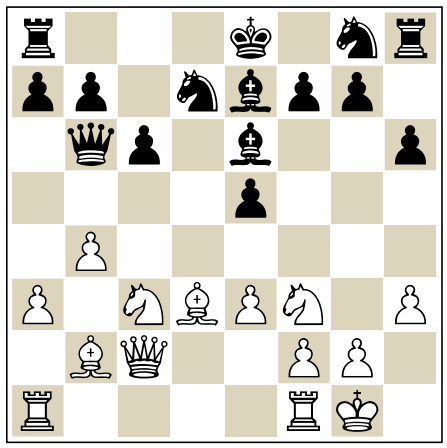
Cometh the hour, cometh the insect.

Time for the Creepy Crawly!

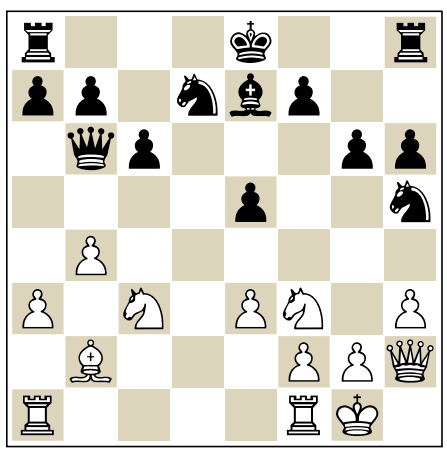
The next chance was the ROC Nova College weekend tournament in Haarlem. This was a slightly more worrying event since I'd have to play six longish games on Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday. No big deal for the hardened professional, but quite a different matter after a week's work! Additional pressure was provided by the live transmission of games on the Internet. Yes, my parents would be watching! And I knew what my mother would say if I lost on time (again)...

Just a slight digression, I really have to mention how fantastic the organization and playing conditions were at both tournaments. The phrase 'weekend tournament' still conjures up visions for me of turning up to a grotty school somewhere in England for a 150 GBP first prize and seeing Tony, Mickey, Julian and a host of IM's on the entry list! These two tournaments were in a completely different class!

Round 2 was the key round for me. Black against IM Van Oosterom. Cometh the hour, cometh the insect. Time for the Creepy Crawly! Before the tournament, Gerard Welling had sent me a number of Basman's games, and it was a joy to play through them again. One of Basman's ideas has always been his complete willingness to sacrifice a central pawn (a c- or a d-pawn) and then play on as if absolutely nothing had happened. His game against Ruud Janssen, Amsterdam 1996, is a good case in point: 1.h3 e5 2.a3 d5 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 ♗e6 5.♕c2 ♕d5 6.♘c3 ♕a5 7.♘f3 ♗e7 8.d3 cxd3 9.♗xd3 ♘d7 10.0-0 h6 11.b4 ♕b6 12.♗b2 c6



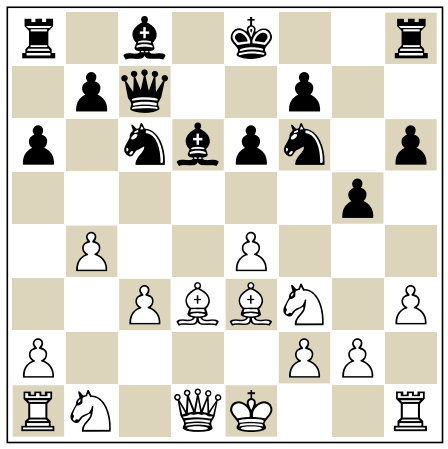
13.♗f5 ♗xf5 14.♕xf5 g6 15.♕g4 ♘gf6 16.♕g3 ♘h5 17.♕h2



I'm not quite sure about what happened around move 13-17, but you get the starting idea!
Well, now take a look at my effort:

VO 1.1 – B00
Chiel van Oosterom
Matthew Sadler
Haarlem 2010 (2)

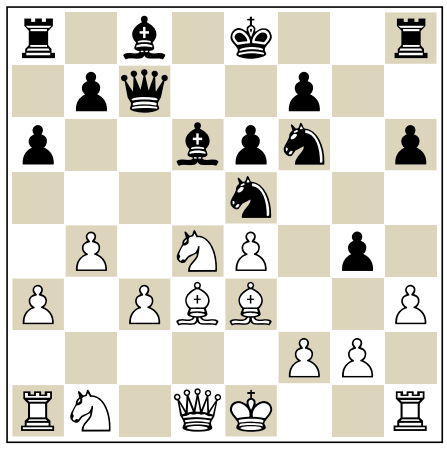
1.e4 a6 2.d4 h6
The arbiter came round looking rather concerned at this point. He told me later that he thought the electronic boards had gone wrong!
3.♗d3 c5 4.dxc5 e6 5.♗e3 ♕c7 6.b4
Well, I'm not going to get that one back in a hurry. I thought I vaguely recalled some very old analysis of Basman involving ...a5xb4 and then ...♕e5 at some stage, but I didn't really want to get into that. Come to think of it, Basman has also played 1.e4 h6 2.d4 c5 an awful lot so it might have been analysis of positions where Black plays ...a7-a5 in one go.
6...♘c6 7.c3 d6 Thematic.
8.cxd6 ♗xd6 9.♘f3 ♘f6 10.h3 g5!



It's wonderful annotating games – I can give exclamation marks to as many of my moves as I like. The e5-square is absolutely key for Black. From e5 a black knight can go to g4 (and destabilize the bishop on e3), prevent c3-c4 (and keep the ♘b1 tied to the c3 pawn) and also target the d3-square. Take away the use of the e5-square from the black knight and Black has no hope whatsoever. 10...g5 introduces the idea of ...g4, either chasing away the white knight from f3, or getting a black knight to g4 after hxg4, ...♘xg4.
11.a3

A surprise, although it's not a bad move. If Black plays quietly with 11...♗d7, then White might try 12.♗d4 ♘xd4 13.cxd4 without losing the b-pawn. I was quite happy to see it though. The more moves White plays to hold on to all his pawns, the more moves I get to claim a lead in development as compensation!

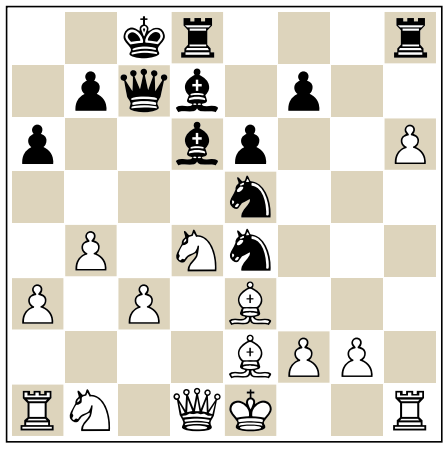
11...g4 12.♘d4 ♘e5



13.♗e2

Another surprise. Once I get rid of the e4-square, my pieces obtain a huge amount of freedom. I get d5 as a transit square and possibilities open up on the a8-h1 diagonal. Last but not least, I get the long-term idea of pushing my e- and f-pawns to gain central space.

13...♘xe4 14.hxg4 ♗d7 15.g5 0-0-0 16.gxh6

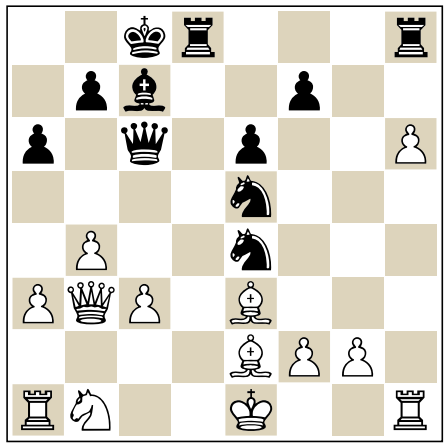


Well, I don't know how well I'm doing here, but I'll always take the black position. I spent some time wondering how many pawns I felt like giving away. 16...f5 17.♕b3 ♘c6 was very tempting with the idea of 18.♘xe6 ♗xe6 19.♕xe6+ ♔b8 20.♕xf5 ♘g3!. I got a bit distracted though with the idea that cropped up in the game.

16...♗c6

The idea is to put the bishop to d5 to discourage ♕b3 and to keep the c-pawn on c3. And if White takes the bishop, then Black gets the queen to the a8-h1 diagonal, which introduces some new tactical ideas.

17.♘xc6 ♕xc6 18.♕b3 ♗c7



19.a4??

19.b5 axb5 20.♕xb5 ♕xb5 21.

♗xb5 ♘g4 was absolutely necessary, when Black's activity compensates for White's extra pawns. My attempts to look innocent and inoffensive when playing 18...♗c7 had obviously worked!

19...♘g3 I'm not sure this is the best move – 19...♘d3+ is extremely tempting – but it just had to be played! **20.fxg3??**

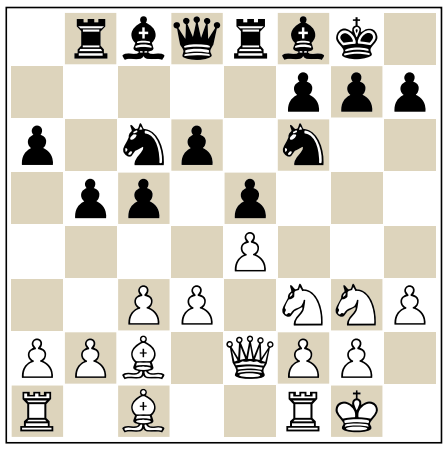
20.♖g1 still gave some hope.

20...♕xg2 21.♖f1 ♘d3+ 22.♗xd3 ♖xd3 White resigned. The point of 18...♗c7 – White doesn't have any ♕c4+ tricks.

The next round was the first big test of the tournament – white against the 19-year-old Ukrainian GM Kravtsiv (what's he doing in a Dutch weekend tournament?) Time for a 19th century opening!

RL 12.3 – C77
Matthew Sadler
Martyn Kravtsiv
Haarlem 2010 (3)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d3 b5 6.♗b3 ♗e7 7.♘bd2 0-0 8.♕e2 d6 9.c3 ♘a5 10.♗c2 c5 11.♘f1 ♘c6 12.♘g3 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♗f8 14.h3 ♖b8



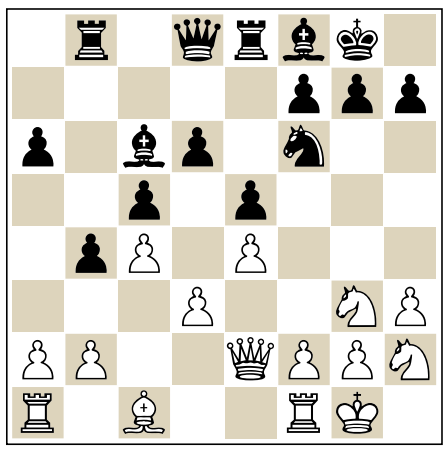
A rather strange move, considering White's most obvious plan is to move his knight from f3 and play f4. After ...exf4, ♗xf4, chances are the rook won't be well-placed on b8. I got the feeling that Black was setting himself up for something rather nasty so I played my next move very quickly.

15.♘h2 b4?

An intriguing move. I guess that Black is aiming for something along the lines of 16.f4 bxc3 17.bxc3 ♕a5 18.♕e1 exf4 19.♗xf4 ♘d5!? 20.♗d2 c4.

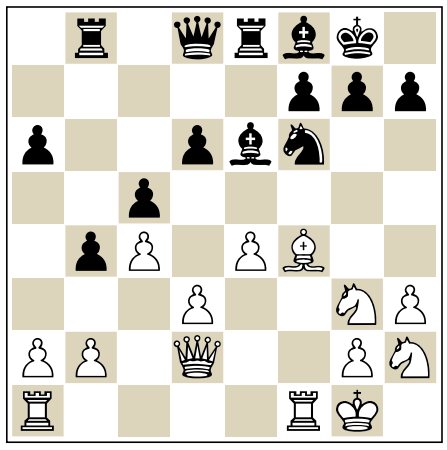
My first thought when I saw it was 'I could have thought of a plan like that!' Yes, that plan could have been taken right out of the 'Matthew-Sadler-book-of-dodgy-positional-plans-based-on-a-rather-nifty-tactical-premise'. Unfortunately in this case (like for so many of my plans), the refutation is rather simple.

16.♗a4! ♗d7 17.♗xc6 ♗xc6 18.c4



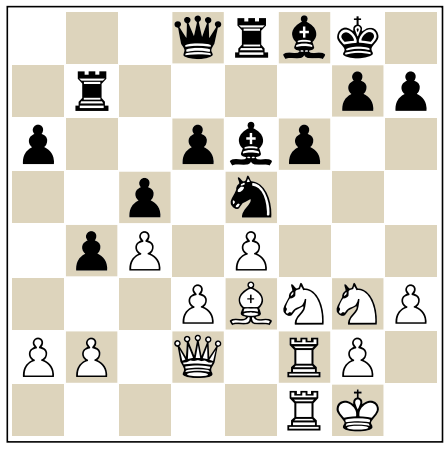
I thought I was more or less winning here. Black has no queenside counterplay and I can take as much time as I like to tee up on the kingside.

18...♗d7 19.f4 exf4 20.♗xf4 ♗e6 21.♕d2



So the basic plan is something like rooks to the f-file, knights somewhere dangerous (f5 and h5 for example) and then a minority attack with g4-g5. I have no idea what Black can do in the meantime.

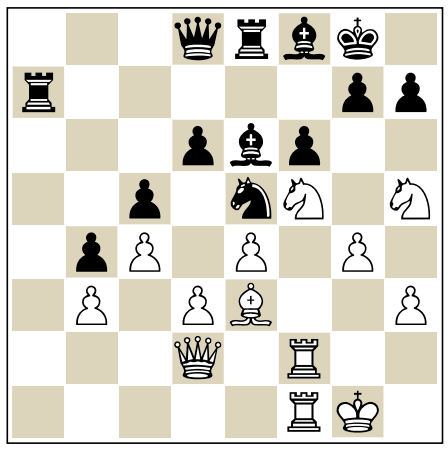
21...♘d7 22.♘f3 f6 23.♖f2 ♘e5 24.♖af1 ♖b7 25.♗e3



25...♕a5

Well, the real Grandmaster move was to play ♖a1 here I guess, avoiding any hint of black counterplay. But I just couldn't take it seriously. ...♕d8. ...a5, ...a4, ...axb3, ...♖a7 and ...♖a3. By the time that Black's ready to make a threat, I'll be playing the next tournament. On top of that, playing b3 gives me the nice extra possibility of breaking in the centre with d4.

26.b3 ♕d8 27.♘h5 a5 28.g4 a4 29.♘h4 axb3 30.axb3 ♖a7 31.♘f5

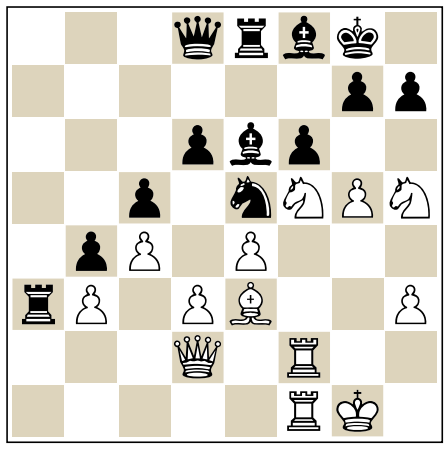


The game has a very 19th century feel to it. By this stage I had reached unparalleled heights of disdain for Black's position. I was also half expecting to be tapped on the shoulder by the arbiter and told that I'd made five moves in a row without waiting for Black to reply.

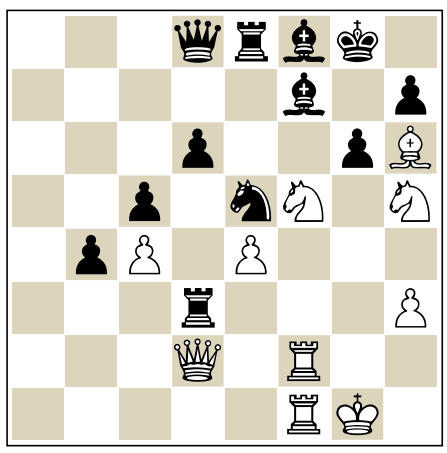
31...♖a3

I looked at the rook, I looked at the black king, and I took the only decision a man can take!

32.g5

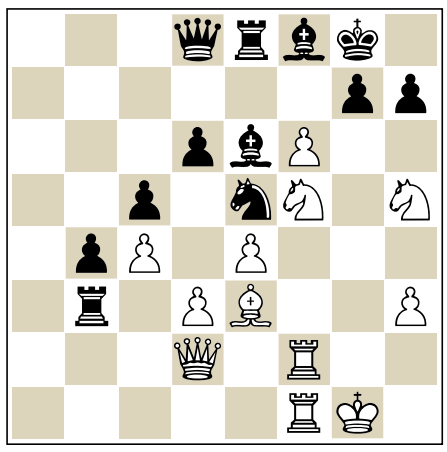


32...♗f7? This allows a massive tactic. Black really had to try 32...♖xb3. I was of course looking forward to demonstrating the full range of my attacking talents. I had actually seen a couple of nice lines. After 33.gxf6, Black has two main possibilities: 33...g6 and 33...♖xd3. White's basic ideas in all cases is to plonk something pointy on g7 (a bishop or a pawn) and then give mate with a knight on h6. 33...g6 leads to some particularly attractive lines: 34.♗h6 ♖xd3 35.f7+! ♗xf7



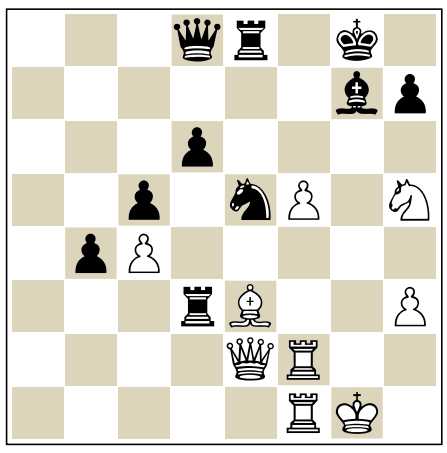
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

36.♗xf8! ♖xd2 37.♘h6+ ♔h8 38.♗g7 mate. Or 37...♔xf8 38.♖xf7+ ♘xf7 39.♖xf7 mate. Very nice!



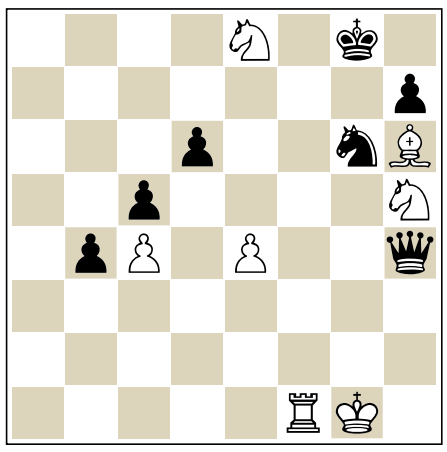
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

After 33...♖xd3, I have the nice in-between move 34.fxg7! ♗xg7 (34...♖xd2 35.♘h6 mate) and now I'm drowning in possibilities. I can go 35.♕e2 ♗xf5 and now either 36.♖xf5 threatening ♖xe5 (with a loose rook on d3) or 36.exf5 looks very strong while I can even consider 35.♘fxg7 ♖xd2 36.♗xd2.
Well...that's not entirely the whole truth unfortunately. A few days after the tournament, it suddenly dawned on me that after 33...♖xd3 34.fxg7 ♗xg7 35.♕e2 ♗xf5 36.♖xf5, I'm not actually threatening 37.♖xe5 because 37...dxe5 defends the rook. 36.exf5 then surely.



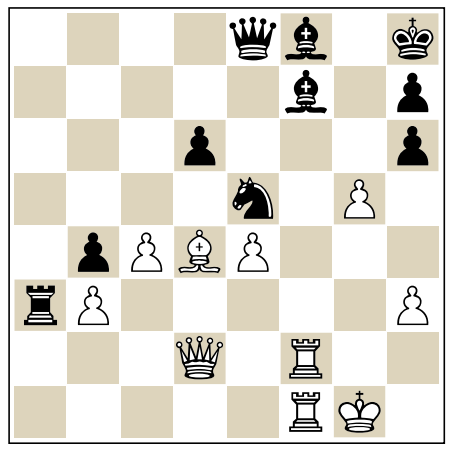
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Well, 36...♗f6! puts a stop to all the fun. One bishop holds up a knight, two rooks and a pawn! So that means I have to fall back to my 'I even have this' option which is normally not good news. It's dangerous, but I don't see a win. After 35.♘fxg7 ♖xd2 36.♗xd2, then Black can always try 36...♗xh3 37.♘xe8 ♗xf1 38.♗h6 ♘g6 39.♖xf1 ♕h4



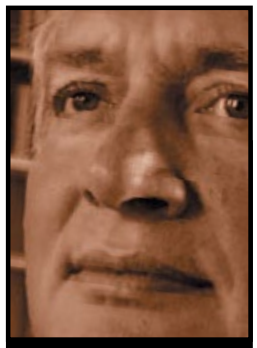
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

when the weakness of White's king and Black's passed b-pawn make it very difficult for White to really undertake anything.
That's really embarrassing. Right, moving swiftly on... back to the game.
33.♘h6+! gxh6
33...♔h8 34.♘xf7+ ♘xf7 35.gxf6 g6 36 ♘g7 is very strong for White.
34.♘xf6+ ♔h8 35.♘xe8 ♕xe8 36.d4! cxd4 37.♗xd4



Everything in White's position is coordinating beautifully. Black is helpless to counter White's battery of rooks along the f-file. A nice point is that the bishop on d4 stops the black rook from retreating to a7.
37...♗g7 38.gxh6 ♖xb3 39.hxg7+ ♔g8 40.♕g5 h6 41.♕xh6 ♖g3+ 42.♖g2
Black resigned.

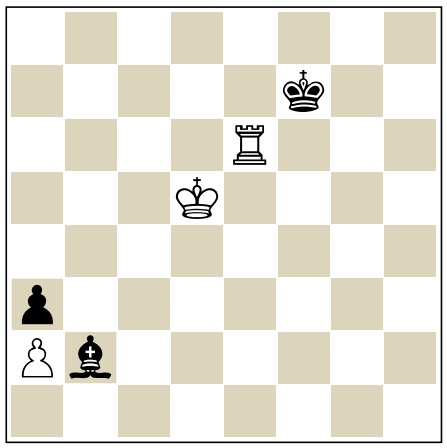
In the next few rounds I dropped a couple of draws, but the last round was another triumph for nopening theory which (amazingly enough) got me clear 1st with 5/6 which is not something you see every day. A nice end to a lovely tournament!
Well, I don't think this is a standard of play that will have any top players quaking in their boots, but at a lower level I still seem to be in with a fighting chance. And that – finally, after 11 years of chess grumpiness – is enough for me!



JAN TIMMAN

♖ and ♙ versus ♗ and ♙ revisited

I have noticed that many top players use *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* as a work of reference, and it is true that it is a good handbook, more exhaustive than Keres' *Practical Endgames*. Recently, however, I found a striking error in the book. Dvoretsky refers to my game against Velimirovic from Rio de Janeiro 1979. After White's 68th move the following endgame had arisen:

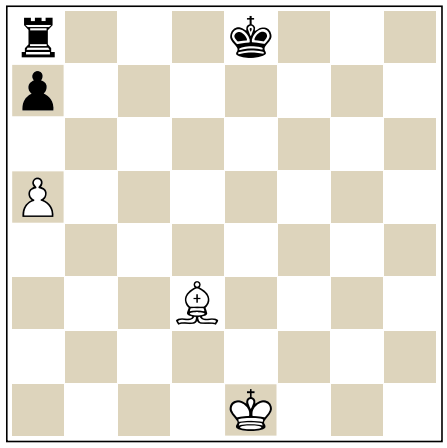


Timman-Velimirovic
Rio de Janeiro 1979

Dvoretsky makes the following general observation about this endgame: 'It was proven that White should win. However the probability of its occurrence in a practical game is rather low, while the proof itself is quite complicated, so we have decided to omit it.'

It is not true that this endgame is always winning. In 1981 I published a long article in *Schaakbulletin* 166 in which I used a diagram to indicate where the safe zones for the black king were. Later, these conclusions were completely confirmed by the database. I also indicated that Velimirovic made the decisive error in the diagrammed position by playing 68...♔f8? (most sources erroneously give 68...♔g7), allowing White to take his king to g5, so that its black counterpart will inevitably be cut off on the back rank. All this can be found in my book *Studies and Games*.

As an interesting illustration I will give you the following mini-study.



White to play and draw

In order to draw White must start with **1.♗e4**
It is important to ensure that the bishop will be able to go to square b7 before advancing the pawn. If the bishop covers the pawn from the f1-a6 diagonal, the position will always be lost.
1...♖b8
1...0-0-0 would have been an ideal move, but unfortunately this is impossible. The position shows that Black's last move must have been a king or rook move.
2.♔d2!
Certainly not 2.a6 in view of 2...♖b2, and the white king is cut off. Now 2...♖b2+ 3.♔c3 ♖a2 runs into 4.♔b4.
2...♔d7 3.a6
Now this is possible.
3...♖b6 4.♗b7 And White is safe.

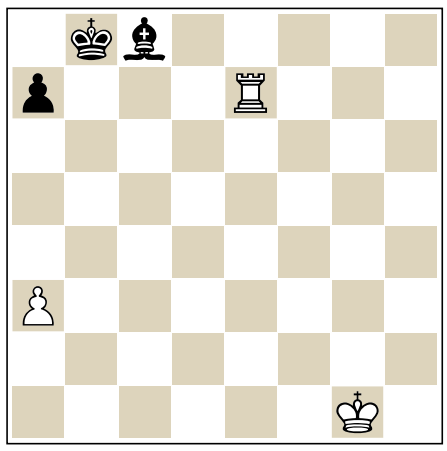
Dvoretsky is not the only person who thinks that this endgame is always won. Spinhoven and Bondarenko are of the same opinion in their book *De strijd tussen loper en toren* (the battle between bishop and rook). This misunderstanding has probably been fostered by the Swiss endgame theoretician Chéron, who had investigated the endgame extensively in the 1960s. He gave a plethora of variations, always with the conclusion that White would win, while emphasizing that there are certain key positions that White must strive for. Chéron never explicitly states that the endgame is winning as such, but a brief study of his work suggests that it is, and he probably thought so himself. It wasn't until after a very deep study of the endgame that I discovered that those key positions cannot always be realized.

Remarkably enough, the endgame only occurred in my game against Velimirovic. Of the position with a white pawn on a3 against a black one on a4 and a white pawn on a4 against a black one on a5 new practical examples are found each year. Equally remarkably, most of the theoretical investigations into endgames

of ♖+♙ vs ♗+♙ (without any passed pawns) concentrate on positions with rook pawns not separated by a square. The position only becomes really interesting with one or more squares between the pawns. Sometimes the moves and conclusions of the database are difficult to understand, but closer analysis usually showed me what exactly was going on.

In the conclusions of my investigations I will restrict myself to positions that can be explained in an acceptable and logical manner, with special focus on the crucial manoeuvres that lead to technical positions – which are the most important for endgame theory. The generally lengthy technical process then unfolds gradually. As this contains few surprises, I will ignore it.

I will start with positions with two rook pawns.

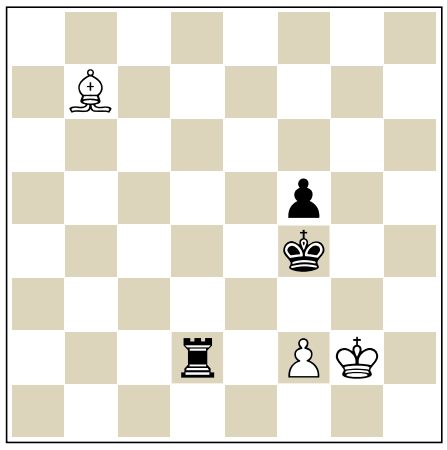


White to play and win

As a rule, the position is winning with the black king cut off on the back rank, regardless of the position of the white king. In the diagrammed position, however, White must watch out. After 1.♔f2? a5! 2.♔e3 ♗b7! it's a draw. There is no remedy against the threat of 3...♗c6. 2...♗g4 won't do in view of 3.♔d2!, and the black bishop is dominated. White wins by playing 1.a4 before deploying the white king.

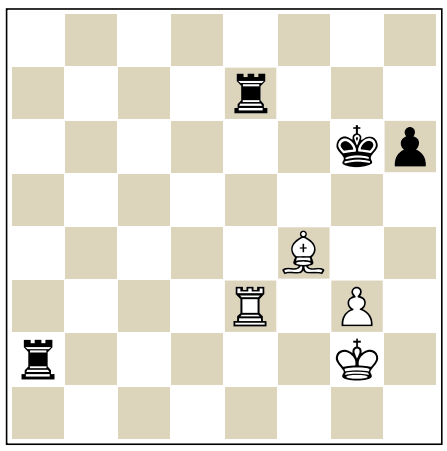
Even with the black king not cut off White can win if he succeeds in taking his king to c5, after which Black cannot prevent his king from being cut off. The position is a draw, however, if Black has the king's bishop, since this will enable him to build a fortress by putting his bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal and advancing his pawn to a6.

There are two famous practical examples in which the pawns are separated.



Gligoric-Polugaevsky
Amsterdam 1970

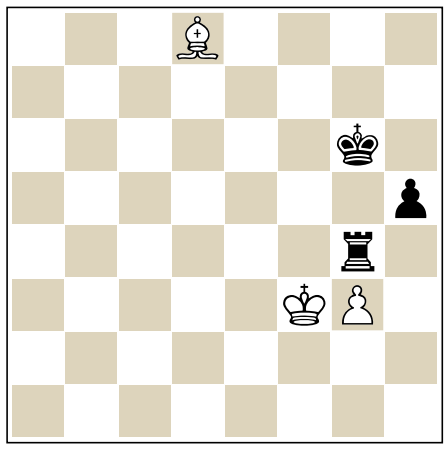
Although Black eventually managed to win, this position is a theoretical draw. This would be different with the black pawn on f7 instead of f5, when Black would have the winning plan of taking his king to e1 via the queenside. White's counterplay then would be to attack the black f-pawn. On f7, however, it is just too far away.



Reshevsky-Fischer
Los Angeles 1961

White played 53.♔f3? here, and now Black could have reached a winning position with 53...♖xe3+ 54.♗xe3 h5, as Evans indicated in *Chess Life*, since White will be unable to stop the black king from reaching the crucial g4-square.

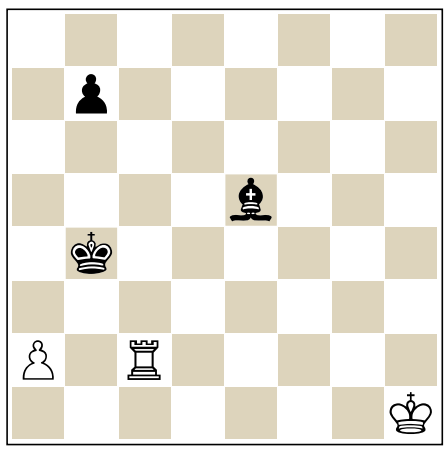
How important it is to secure square h3 for the white king is clear to see in the following position:



White to play and draw

1.♔g2! On its way to h3. **1...♔f5 2.♔h3 ♖c4 3.♗e7!** The only square for the bishop, as we'll see. **3...♖c1 4.♗f8!**
The point of the previous move. The bishop is forced to hide itself; otherwise Black would give check on h1 and then attack the white bishop.
4...♖b1 5.♗g7(h6) and Black won't make any progress.

In the example Reshevsky-Fischer, the position would also have been winning if the black pawn had been on its starting square. Sometimes it's even winning if the king of the attacking player is far away.



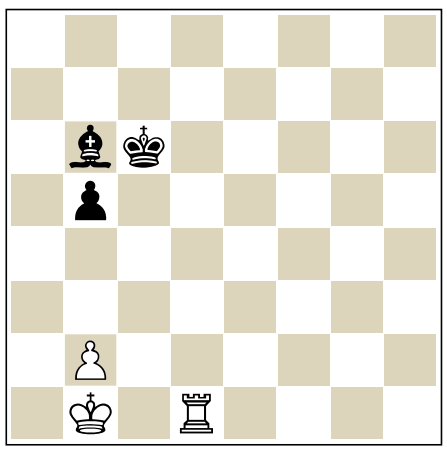
White to play and win

Black is threatening to draw immediately by playing 1...♔a3, followed by 2...♗b2.

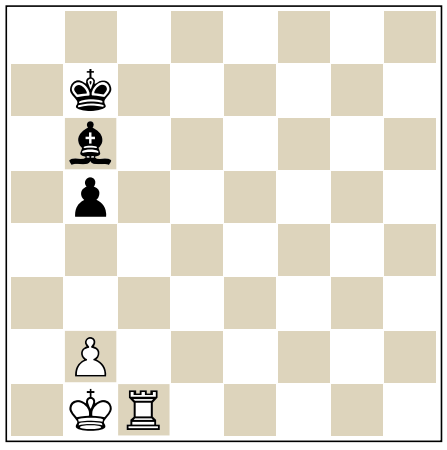
1.♖e2! ♗d4 2.♖d2 ♗c3 3.♖d3
White has brought the situation under control. Now he has all the time in the world to take his king closer. The quickest route is via the fourth rank, since its eventual destination is c8. The win will take another 65 moves.

Remarkably enough, the diagram position with the king on h7 (instead of h1) would be a draw. In that case Black can save himself with 3...b5! 4.♔g6 ♔a3! 5.♖xc3+ ♔xa2, and the white king is not in time to reach square e2 to restrict its black counterpart's freedom of movement. With the king on h5, however, the position would be winning by the narrowest of margins.

In the following position White has only one winning move.


White to play and win

1.♖c1+!
The main point is that Black can no longer take his bishop to c5.
1...♔b7
Now White has two entirely different winning plans:

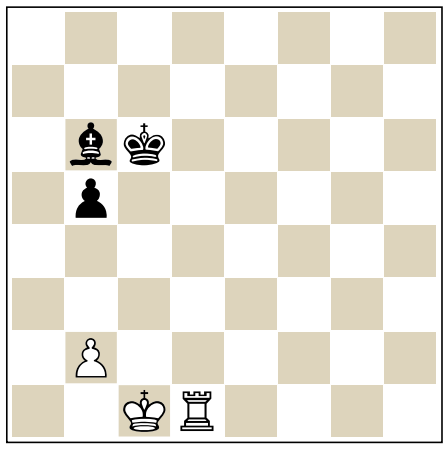


A) 2.♖f1 ♔a6 3.♖f6 ♔a5 4.b4+! ♔a6 5.♔c2 ♔b7 6.♔d3, and now it becomes clear why 2.♖h1 was insufficient for the win, since in that case, Black would be able to activate his bishop with 6...♗f2. White must always make sure to continue to dominate the enemy bishop. After 6...♔c7 7.♔e4 ♔b7 8.♔d5 ♗g1 9.♖g6 ♗f2 10.♖g7+ ♔b6 11.♖g2 ♗e3 12.♔e4! the black bishop is forced to leave the g1-a7 diagonal, after which the win is simple.

B) 2.♔c2 ♗c5, and now White will have to be careful: after 3.♔d3 ♔b6! 4.♔e4 ♗e7! 5.♖f1 ♔a5! Black would throw up an efficient defensive line. Winning is 3.♖f1! ♔b6 4.♔c3!, and the black bishop is dominated again. The white king is threatening to penetrate via d4.

If Black has a queen's bishop, he can build an effective defensive line by keeping his b6 pawn and his bishop on the long h1-a8 diagonal, from which they cannot be driven away through domination.

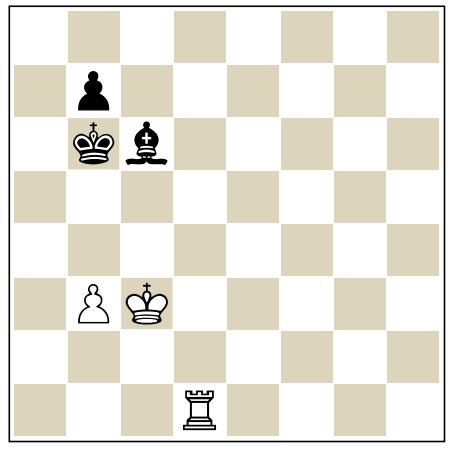
With the white king on c1 (instead of b1) in the diagrammed position White would have no win, since he doesn't have the crucial rook check. But Black would have to play very accurately to hold his ground.



The main line goes as follows:
1.♔c2 ♗c5! 2.♔d3 ♗f8! 3.♖g1
Keeping the bishop from g7.
3...♔c5 4.♖g6 ♔b4
And White will make no progress.

All Black's moves were the only moves with which to maintain the balance.

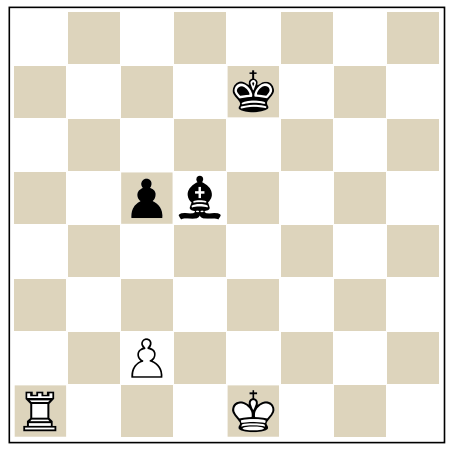
Sometimes White is able to win because of chance circumstances.


White to play and win

1.♔b4! ♔c7 2.♔a5! b6+ 3.♔a6
And the white king has penetrated decisively.

If both players have a c-pawn, there are more winning positions. White usually wins, for example, if the pawns are on their starting squares and Black has a king's bishop.

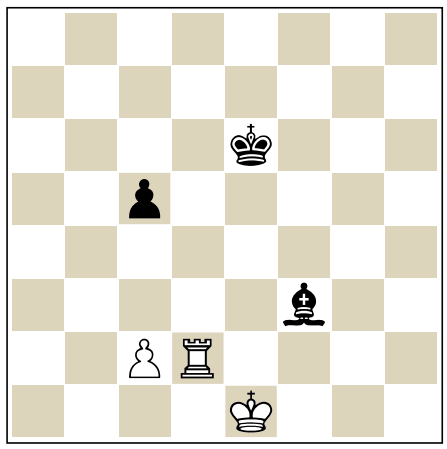
The following position is a curious one.


White to play and win

The solution is: **1.0-0-0!**
Black's problem is that his king remains cut off. His winning plan involves taking the king to a4. A possible continuation is: 1...♔e6 2.♔b2 ♔e5 3.♔a3 ♗c6 4.♔b3 ♗b5 5.♔c3, followed by 6.♖b1. The bishop cannot stay on the f1-a6 diagonal, which means that

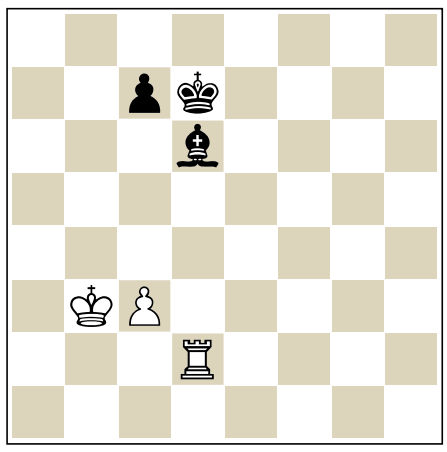
the white king will penetrate. An important consideration is that the king has square c3: with the white pawn on c3 (instead of c2) the diagrammed position would be drawn.

White cannot win with 1.♖d1, because after 1...♔e6 2.♖d2 ♗f3! his own king would also be cut off.



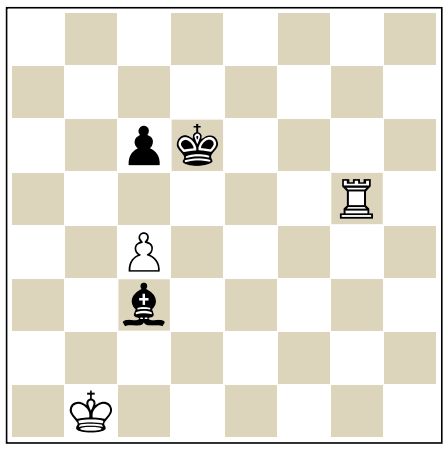
3.♖d8 is no good, as this is met by 3...♗d5, and the trap is sprung behind the white rook.

Here, too, it is very important that the white pawn was still on its starting square, but the endgame contains an interesting paradox: generally speaking it is advisable to keep the pawn back, but once it is on the third rank, it is often better to advance it as far as possible. This can be seen in the following position.



White to play and win

1.♔c4 c6 2.♔d4 Centralization.
2...♔c7
2...♗a3 would have been met by 3.♖a2!. But not 3.c4? in view of 3...♔d6, and Black has the situation under control.
3.c4!
The only way to make progress.
3...♔b6 4.♖b2+ ♔c7 5.c5
And this position is winning, because the black bishop's movements are restricted. Only if the bishop can be taken to the g1-d4 diagonal does a position arise which, in certain circumstances, may be drawn.

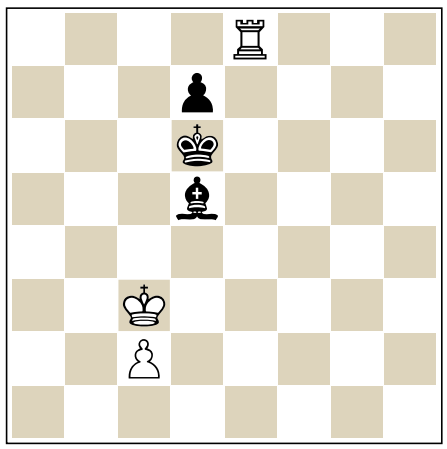


White to play and draw

1.c5+ ♔c7 2.♔c2 ♗d4! 3.♔d3 ♗f2 4.♖f5 ♗g1! 5.♔c4
Threatening 6.♔b4 and 7.♔b5.
5...♗e3 or **5...♔b7**
And White can make no progress.

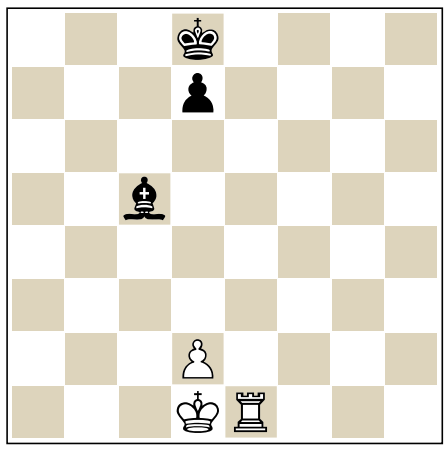
With the pawns moved one square to the left, there are even fewer winning chances. The pawn structure prevents White from penetrating with the king via the queenside.

The following position is also interesting.



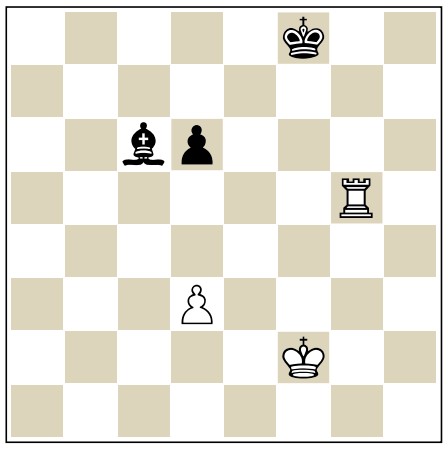
White to play and win

1.♔d4 Centralization.
1...♗b7
The most tenacious defence. The obvious move now is 2.♖h8, intending to create more room for the rook for horizontal checks. But this is met by 2...♔c6, with the threat of 3...d6, and Black has a fortress. And 3.♔e5 is met strongly by 3...♔c5!: not the black king is cut off but the white one.
2.♖e3!
The only winning move. White prepares a check on c3 in order to prevent Black from building a fortress.
2...♔c6 3.♖c3+ ♔d6
And now 4.♖g3 makes for the quickest win. Eventually the black king will be forced back, and then White will have to play accurately: if the black king goes to e7, White takes his king to c5; if Black withdraws the king to c7, White penetrates via e5.



White to play and win

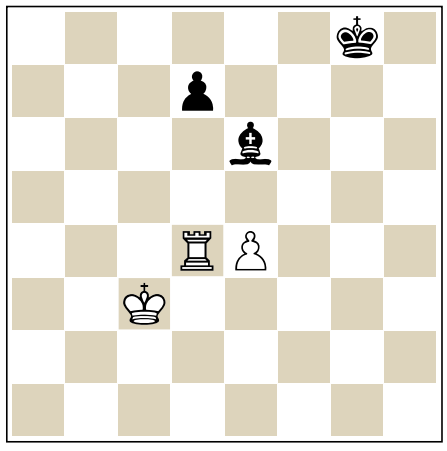
Black is threatening to build an impregnable defensive line with 1...♔c7, followed by 2...d5.
1.♖e4!
The same principle as in the previous position. White takes the rook to the c-file in order to upset the coordination in the enemy camp.
1...♔c7 2.♖c4! ♔d6 3.♔c2
The only way. After 3.♔e2? ♔d5 4.♔d3 ♔c6! the white d-pawn would be blocked, giving Black time to play 5...d5.
3...♔d5 4.♔c3!
And White has the situation under control. From this point on it will take another 67 moves to the mate.



White to play

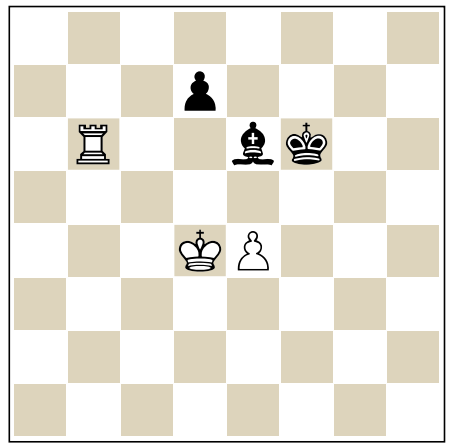
With the pawn on d2 White would have an easy win. Now he will have to advance the pawn again.
1.d4! ♔f7 2.d5!
And now White will play up his king.
If White starts with 1.♔e3, Black can draw with very accurate play:
1.♔e3 ♔e7 2.♔d4 ♗f3!
The only move. Black wants to take his king to d7, after which he can make his sortie via c6 and e6.
3.♔c4 ♔d7 4.♖g3
After 4.♔b5 ♔e6! 5.♔b6 ♗e2! Black will just be able to save himself.
4...♗h1! Unlikely. Black has to keep his bishop on the long diagonal at all cost.
5.♔b5 ♔e6! Threatening to take the king to the fifth rank.
6.♖g5 ♗f3
And the drawn position of the comment to White's fourth move has arisen again.

I will finish with an example of lighter calibre.



White to play and win

In light of the above it is not difficult to find White's moves.
1.♖d6! ♔f7 2.♔d4 ♔f6 3.♖b6 (Or 3.♖a6)



And Black is in zugzwang. After **3...♔e7 4.♔e5** Black will be forced back to the back rank, after which the play could continue as follows: **4...♗f7 5.♖h6 ♗e6 6.♖h7+ ♗f7 7.♖g7 d6+ 8.♔f5 ♔e8 9.♔f6 ♗c4 10.♖c7 ♗b3 11. ♖c3**, followed by **12.♖d3**, and wins.

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JUST CHECKING

NAME: **Klaus Bischoff**

ELO-RATING: **2553**

DATE OF BIRTH: **June 9, 1961**

PLACE OF BIRTH: **Ulm, Germany**

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: **Frankfurt/Main, Germany**

NEW IN CHESS

What is your favourite colour?
Red.

What kind of food makes you happy?
A barbecue with friends, in my own garden.

And what drink?
White beer.

What was the most interesting book you ever read?
Billard um halbzehn (Billiards at half past nine) by Heinrich Böll.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Casablanca.

What is your favourite TV series?
I do not have one. Actually, it happened to me more than once that after a tournament I did not even know if the tv in my room worked. The reason is simple, I had not switched it on.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Humphrey Bogart, Al Pacino.

And a favourite actress?
Ingrid Bergman, Ellen Barkin.

What music do you like to listen to?
Nowadays chess players seem to be connected with Rammstein, but I still listen to good old stuff like Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Joan Baez and Cat Stevens.

Do you have a favourite painter or artist?
I like Pieter Bruegel or Peter Paul Rubens a lot. Modern Art is not too exciting for me.

Who are the three greatest chess players of all time?
Lasker, Fischer, Spassky.

What was the best game you have ever played?
Bischoff-Sakaev, Saint-Vincent 2005.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Tigran Petrosian. I like his powerful prophylaxis a lot.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
Timman-Kortchnoi, Las Palmas 1981 (1-0, 60).

What is the best chess country in the world?
Probably Georgia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Complaining that life is so difficult.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
Far too many. But I change my shirt daily. And pencils do not win games.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Bill Gates, William Wirth, Vishy Anand.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
If only I were a better cook...

What is your greatest fear?
To become ill.

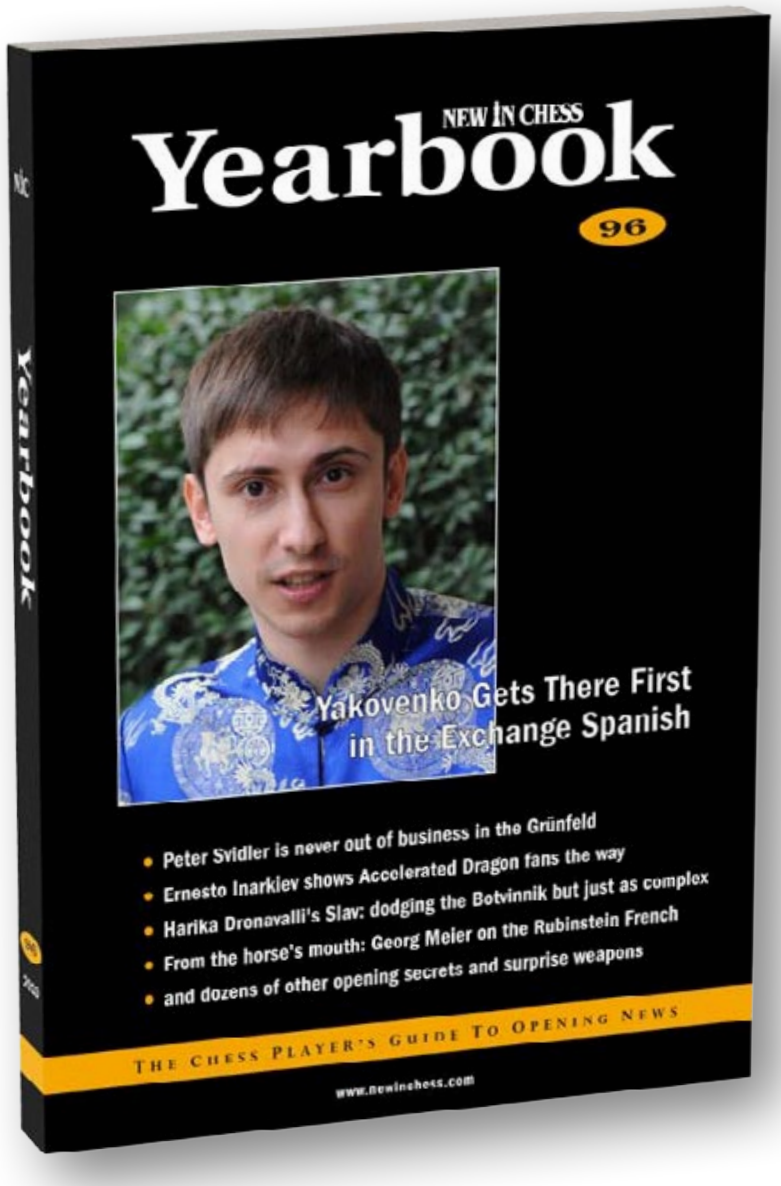
What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
Of course I would try to save Ingrid, my wife. But she would probably have saved me before I would get around to helping her.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
If it was up to me, the organization of the World Championship would be done by UEP.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
There is nothing wrong with the rules. Still, it is not fair that there is no mate with two extra knights.

‘Fantastic value for money’ – **British Federation Corr. Chess**

NEW



96

With answers to urgent questions like:

- What torpedo shot blew up the 5...♕f6 line in the Exchange Ruy Lopez?
- How does Ernesto Inarkiev prevent a white kingside attack against the Accelerated Dragon?
- Which forgotten Grünfeld line was recently revived by a former top GM?
- How can you avoid Botvinnik Slav theory while still creating similar complications?
- What is the brilliant new invention in the Four Knights English?
- What move brought Pavel Elianov success against the Advanced Caro-Kann?
- Can you crush the Classical King’s Indian like this rising star does?
- Is Emil Sutovsky’s queen sac in the Spanish Four Knights sound?
- How did a 20-year-old player cause a big shock in a worn-out Petroff line?
- With what move does an American star open the Closed Sicilian?
- With what high-risk move can you avoid the isolani in the Classical Nimzo-Indian?
- Can Peter Svidler uphold the Exchange Grünfeld after 8.♗e3?
- Is Levon Aronian’s blitz weapon 3...♘ge7 versus the Ruy Lopez viable in ‘serious chess’?
- Why didn’t Magnus Carlsen listen to what Tigran Petrosian said about the King’s Gambit?
- When can you sac your knight on d5 against the Hedgehog?

And much more...

For the contents of Yearbook 96 see www.newinchess.com/latestYB

The Chess Player’s Guide to Opening News

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